

The Beat Within



THE BEAT WITHIN • A WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF WRITING AND ART FROM THE INSIDE • VOLUME 13.04



Can you believe we are in 2008! Wow, this year is taking off. We can't believe we already have four issues under our belt! The big 13.04 issue!

No joke on this end, we take this work seriously. We take the workshops to the publication very serious, that's why we are in your units, never fail, every week. That's why we been doing this for so many years and why we are successful! We are consistent, like us or not! It's obvious we need you writers and you need us, if we want this to work. We need you contributors to tell the readers the truth, or your lies. We need you writers to break the stereotypes so easily placed on you, or to help reinforce the image one has who is locked up. Every single one of you are the voices from the inside — be it from a facility in New Mexico, to the mother ship in San Francisco, to you writers in the deep south, to you insightful ones on the east coast! We need your wisdom. We need to come together, to teach, to share and support, to do your part to wake up the nation! Think about how many people drive by institutions such as the one you sit in today/night and wonder... They wonder who is inside there? They wonder what you look like? They wonder what kind of conversations are going on? They wonder if you deserve and need to be locked up? They wonder if you look like those bad boys and girls that Hollywood portrays on the idiot box. They wonder if you are truly being treated poorly. They wonder what is working and what's not. OR they don't think about you at all, and could care less. Probably the latter, right. So, with that said, if we can get your voices in The Beat Within, and do our best to get this publication in the hands of the wonderers, or those who claim they don't care at all, we are then helping all understand the truths about you.

Last Wednesday evening we had the great privilege to speak in the community. We did a Beat book reading at Modern Times Bookstore, which is located in the heart of the Mission District in San Francisco. It was truly a celebration of our great work over the years. Thank you writers!! Our good friend and colleague Michael Kroll so kindly emceed. He did a fabulous job in setting the stage for our onlookers and friends to truly grasp the evening. He opened the hour-long engagement by educating all who we are and then reading a piece from Michael Cabral's work and later a piece by Professor Blackmind. He then handed over the podium to our ol' colleague Omar Turcios who dazzled the audience with a Terry Lytle piece, which is featured in this issue and a tribute poem he wrote to our colleague, Allen Bow. RIP. Michael, the glue, came back and read another piece and then handed over the stage to our friend, young writer, who was recently released from San Mateo, Friskie, who read a super poem she wrote about her latest bout with freedom. Off topic, we do hope she is okay, we haven't seen her since. Up next was powerhouse poet, Will Roy. Will as always dazzled us with his work. He read several staggering, thoughtful poems — a poem about his brother Allen Bow, to a poem about the problems of getting out and finishing off a poem about us all, The Beat Within. Plus, this editor was given the opportunity to share and read a piece, the piece shared was from our old friend James Ortega and his letter to his son. In the end there wasn't a dry eye in the house. The power of bringing The Beat to life was so evident. All in attendance were moved. It touched people like nothing we had seen in a long time.

What this event told this editor is that we need to do more readings in the community. Bringing the publication life is breathtaking. You writers do a heartfelt and courageous job, and we are honored to share your important work in the publication each week, but equally powerful is reading your work aloud (when opportunity arises) to an audience who otherwise would never have the chance to pick up The Beat Within, or would have never known of us.

The following day, we received emails/pats on the back from a few dear friends regarding the evening...

"That was great last night. The Beat is so powerful, but when you hear it read aloud it brings it to life and really

tugs at the heart! You guys are awesome, keep up the amazing work! I feel so lucky to get to witness all you guys do for our kidos." —Brittany, City Youth Now

"I was glad to be there. I love law school—at least most of the time—but there is nothing here that resonates with anywhere near the emotional power of The Beat. Last night was a great reminder of that power. I was serious when I said that I intend to keep a copy of the book near my desk at work (wherever I am). It will serve as a great reminder of why I made the choice to come to school in the first place. I hope to see you again soon. Congratulations again on the book's publication and — more significantly — on The Beat's continued success in changing lives." Matt, former colleague

"We respect the work that the Beat With In does and would like to help support in any way . Thanks again for inviting us and the event was beautiful!"

- Venus, CYWD

"I heard great things about the event from our staff — we'd love to do something else with y'all. " Dia, Modern Times

Moving right along lets take on the topics that were addressed in this issue prior to the writing you are about to read. Oh, by the way, there is no writing from issue 13.04 from Santa Clara County, this is the evening when we the program was cancelled for Santa Claus' visit to the hall. Sorry SJ readers, there's always next week - 13.05!!

The first topic, "Who are you?" - What things have caused you to be who you are today? We all have different people and settings in our lives that shape who we are. Many things can make an impact on us: our experiences with family and friends, different areas we've traveled to, neighborhoods we live in, violence that we've witnessed or participated in, role models, our ethnicities, the languages we speak, attitudes and personalities, and the choices we've made in life. Tell the Beat what has made you become the person you are.

Second topic, "Loss of a role model" - What does it feel like when someone you think of as a role model gets locked up? Does it change your opinion of them? Do you still want to be like them? Does it make you mad, upset, frustrated, or abandoned? Do you feel like they have let you down? Where do you find the wisdom to still respect that person, but not follow their footsteps to jail? What responsibility do you feel to people who might think of you as a role model? Share with The Beat your thoughts.

Third topic, "Down On Your Luck" - Only you know when you are down on your luck. Only you know your fears and frustration that comes with this empty feeling of being down and out. Only you know what it feels when you're facing a long journey back to feeling that things are okay. Is this the hand of fate you have been dealt? Or, did you have a hand in creating your fate? How did it get to this point? Tell us of an unfortunate time when you felt down on your luck. How did it get to this point? What steps must be taken? If you never felt this way, then tell us of a time when you were "up" on your luck!

Last but not least, "Who are you most afraid to lose? And why?" - Many of us have someone in our lives we care about a whole lot. Just thinking about something happening to them makes us feel awful. It could be a child, parent, close friend, a beloved animal, or someone else. Whoever, or whatever it is, tell The Beat who you are most afraid to lose, and why they are so important to you? If you don't have someone like this in your life, tell us why you think that's the case.

Time to go, it doesn't stop on this end, so lets give a shout out to The Beat Within and all of us associated to this special work, from the writers to the editors and everyone in between, you all deserve hugs, handshakes and pats on the back. Keep it moving! No time to chill! See you next week.

The Beat Within, a weekly newsletter of writing and art by incarcerated youth, is published by Pacific News Service.

At The Beat Within, we go through a lot of trouble to censor inappropriate sexual remarks, foul language, and gang references. There is enough tension in our communities already—we don't aim to bolster it. It is in The Beat's interest to promote peace and unity. Our goal is to educate one another.

The Beat Within publishes the opinions and views expressed by the participants in our workshops. This is simply the pure voice of the youth. The views you read do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher, editor or staff. All rights are reserved. Nothing from this publication can be reproduced without our written permission.

To our writers: What you write could be hazardous to you. Your words have consequences, and could be used to incriminate you. Try to illuminate your feelings and viewpoints without running the risk of providing ammunition for those who might use your words against you.

Co-founders: Sandy Close and David Inocencio

Senior Editors: David Inocencio

Assistant Editors: Michael Kroll, Will Roy

Graphics/Layout Editor: Manen Pau

Staff: Pauline Craig, Jill Wolfson, Allan Tinker, Patricia Johnson, Amanda Ables, Omar Turcios, Dennis Morton, Sheerly Avni, Jennifer Clarke, Britany Bernard, Perry Jones, Tal Ariel, Margo Ariel Brockman, Brenda Navarro-Duante, Elizabeth Crawford, Morghan Velez Young, Siliva Mortenson, Michaela Levin, Griffin Jones, Eric Lee, Andrew Barba, Estella Cisneros, Allen Huang, Nic Reiner, Angelica Zabanal, Charles Labanowski, Kolby Hanson, Chelsea Sprick, Akima Edwards, Alfred Dersidan and Neela Banerjee.

The Maricopa County, Phoenix, Arizona, Juvenile Probation Department Beat Staff: Joe Szulecowski, M.A., Lisa Donsker, M.C., Hillary Shluker, M.C., Lisa Karczewski, M.A. The detention staff are: Tammie Utter, Shannon Lechner, D. Scott Herrmann, Ph.D. Clinical Director.

Bernalillio County, New Mexico "The Land of Enchantment" Juvenile Detention & Youth Services Center Beat Staff: Steve Serna and Lisa Santoyo

Art: Much props to everyone for the great art this week.

Spiritual Advisor: Jack Jacqua

Special Volunteer: Nancy DeMartini

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Writers: Thanks to all the participants in our workshops in the San Francisco, Maricopa County Arizona, Santa Clara, San Mateo, Alameda, Bernalillio County New Mexico, Santa Cruz and Marin County Juvenile Halls. If you have any questions or comments about The Beat Within, or if you would like to become a subscriber, contact us at: 275 Ninth St. SF.CA. 94103 or call (415) 503-4170 or check us out at:

www.thebeatwithin.org

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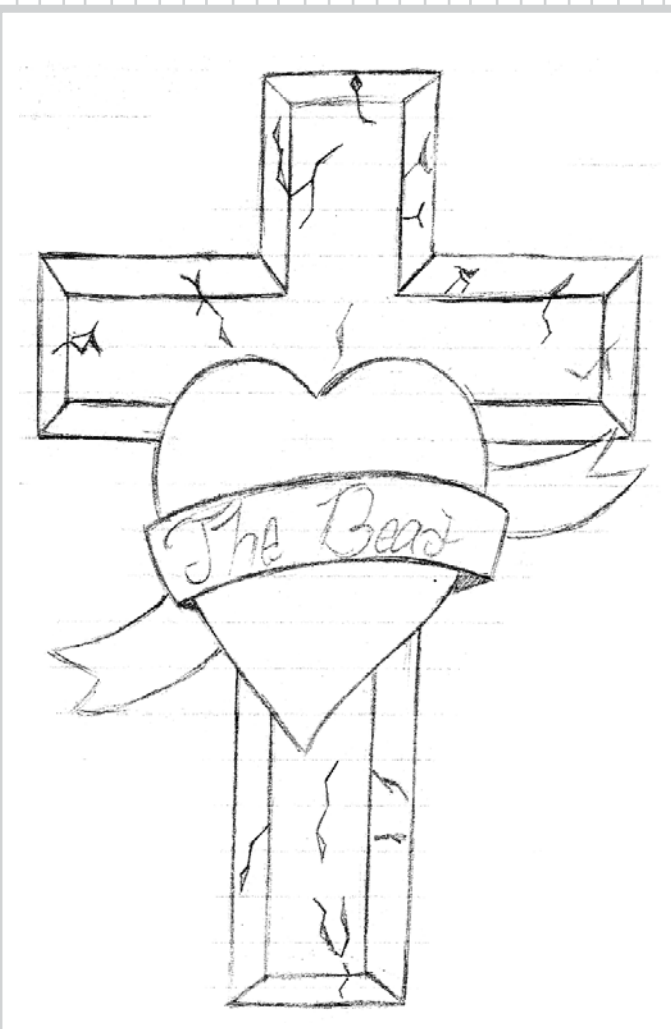
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Hello From Bernalillo County

We, the Youth Program Officers at Bernalillo County Juvenile Detention and Youth Services Center, want to convey our appreciation for having the opportunity to be part of "The Beat Within."

Our voices from the Land Of Enchantment want to be heard and shared. Here in Albuquerque, New Mexico, our crime and violence rate is in the top 10 in the nation. With that in mind, we have plenty to communicate! Our youth have expressed an array of unfortunate home-life situations, dangerous incidents on the streets, feelings of neglect and abuse, constant interactions with gang-life, and close encounters to death. The residents have utilized this proficient program to decipher their past actions and future outcomes.

Thank you for providing them an outlet to write and learn about life's consequences.

Sincerely,

- Lisa Santoyo and Steve Serna, YPO I's

Who am I most afraid to loose?

Who am I most afraid to loose? My mom because you know she is the most important person in the world. She is my hero when I'm sick; she takes very good care of me. There's not a time or another person that's there for me as much as my mom, and she gives me good advice.

If I'd lose her like I have lost her now, that's like death for me. I'm already getting very sick because I can't see her, and right now I would do anything just not to lose my mom. Even when I was mad at her she was all I really cared about.

- Nolia-b

From The Beat: With most people that are locked up, that is the first person they miss the most, their mothers, yet when they are in the "outs" she is the last person they ever think about. Were you thinking of your mother just a short time before you got arrested? To most, the answer would simply be no.



From The Beat: For over six months, possibly longer, we have had the incredible privilege of including our colleagues in New Mexico aka the Land Of Enchantment in The Beat Within. Each and every week these writers step up huge. This week we want to put them front and center, and before we give them the floor, we do want to say it is our goal to come out and visit you writers and friends in New Mexico this year too. OK, a big thank you to you all for the love you share through words.

Who are you?

A man
A boy
A son of joy

A bird
A nobody
A soul to be heard

Who are you?

The strong
The hurt
The one who never does wrong

The one living on the streets
The one with no money, no food
The one finding themselves writing to "The Beat"

Take the time to try and find out who you are, not only in jail but through everyday experiences. Let everything you do benefit you in any way possible. Try not to let anything break you, bring you down, or upset you. I ask again, who are you?

- Jeffrey

From The Beat: You've described a person who is "strong", "hurt", and "never does wrong". Let us know at The Beat, "who are you"?

My Dad!

The person I'm most afraid lose is my dad. The reason is because he's really, really sick. My dad has diabetes. He has to go to dialysis, and has the brain of a 90 year old man.

Recently, my dad stopped taking all his medications and stopped going to dialysis. Because of his choices, the doctor told our family that he would only have two weeks to live. Our family was devastated. A lot of the family went to try and convince him to take his medications. He wouldn't listen. My grandpa went and talked to him. My dad changed his mind real quick. The only reason that he changed his mind was because of Christmas, and my twin brother and I are turning 18. But my dad told me that once Christmas and my birthday pass, he will stop taking his medicine and die.

One of the reasons I'm afraid to lose my dad is because I barely got him back in my life. The whole time he's been back in my life, he's been a meth-head and sick in the hospital.

The thing that hurts the most is that my birthday is in 24 days and then I won't have my dad anymore, how sad. The only role in my life that my dad has played is my homie. I'll never get the chance to see how it feels to have him act like a real dad to me or my brother, screw it.

- Rochelle

From The Beat: You stated that you're dad has played the "homie" role with you, which is pitiful of him. Although you wanted "him to act like real dad", you'll have to execute good morals and a positive attitude on your own. Just because he's gone, doesn't mean you're lost.



My Words

My words of strength,
Express my pain.

The sharpness of a needle
The blinding of the sun
The grinding of my teeth
It's an everlasting run.

Run from my fears
The fears that cause tears
Run from my pain
And this feeling of a repeated game
Run from unwanted time
And regretted crime.

This is how I describe my life,
What it is
And what it makes me feel
This is an explanation that can't get more real.

So the experience I share
To try to help others understand
As it grows on me like hair.

Through my writing I rejoice
As it brings me strength
And from deep inside, a voice.

-Jeffrey

From The Beat: You said that you "run from your fears" and that's probably why you're stuck in here. Focus on determining what got you in here and what you can change. We're glad that writing for The Beat gives you joy, keep writing!

Was My Role Model

My brother is my role model
Until he had a bail bond
I was his tag-a-long
Until he was in chains
He had the brain
Until he took a hit of that g
He was my leader
Until he was in an orange jumpsuit
He used to wear a business suit
And I'm supposed to be a role model
Sorry lil' sis
But look where I'm at
Now I'm a start changing my act.

- King Henry

From The Beat: We're glad you see that he's not your role model anymore. It's not too late to be role model to your little sister. We at The Beat want to know how you intend to change your act.

Who are you!!!

Who am I really?

Who are you?

I am you trust me

Were the same people in every way

Life's a trip in every way.

Locked up they won't let me out,

Dam what is this place about?

I wish I could be my mother

I wish I could be with my brother

This place sucks, what luck

I don't think any one gives a flying puck

I wan'na be out side with my friends

Forget the repercussion

Friends don't mean anything.

- Kung Pow

From The Beat: An interesting choice of words, Kung Pow. Is it confusion or is it the lack of caring you have? Let us at the Beat know just who you are, without all the confusion in your words.

Running Out Of Luck

Running out of luck is when the cops caught me up
because we were out there fighting
with some people over something dumb at school.
We were fighting over a spot and our spot was the bench
that my homies and I kick it at school.
While we were fighting the cops came and arrested us
and took us in and that's how I ran out of luck.

- Delinquent

From The Beat: It's hard to see how you ran out of luck with this story. It sounds more like you simply got caught breaking the law for fighting over a bench that belongs to the school? You should focus your attention on something productive to accomplish something rather than worrying about a "bench" you'll never be able to take home.

Afraid To Lose My Grandma

I'm afraid to lose my grandma, because she's like my mom. I've been with her since I was six months old. Always looked up to her she's showed me to always be ready to work, and get along with people and be respectful to ladies. I've never been disrespectful to girls, and she's made me a working, respectful man and I wouldn't want to lose my grandma.

- Anthony

From The Beat: As the saying goes, "talk is cheap" you say that your grandmother taught you not to be disrespectful? You mention this more then once, yet you have done the one thing she has tried to teach you. You have disrespected her, how, you are wondering? You have disrespected your grandmother by getting arrested and put in the D-home. It's time to change your ways and follow your grandmother's advice before it's too late.

The Beat
Within

My Life

My life started when my mom gave me birth. I started having a good childhood until my father went to jail and got sent to the pen, when I was three years old. Ever since, I never seen him again. My mom had a hard time taking care of me and my sister, because she was sick all the time.

When I was eleven years old, I started having trouble with the law. Then I got suspended at school. Eventually I got expelled.

When I was twelve years old, I got locked up. After that I got out and I keep coming in and out... six times! Then I realized 'til today I was hurting my mom so much. Now I want another chance. But I got locked up so much, they won't give me one more chance. When I get out I need to start taking care of my mom and stop hurting her so much. I'm so sorry, mom.

-Lil' T, San Francisco

From The Beat: It takes some people longer than others to open adult eyes and see what they are doing to themselves and to the people they love. It's not important how many times you've been here, but only how many times you plan to come back. We hope the answer to that is: None!

The Morning After...

She sits there in a state of mind
As she leaves our world behind
She remembers when you left her there
The things you said were so unfair
Blankly staring at your picture
She wonders if you have even missed her
As she sits there all alone
Waiting by the telephone
Wishing she could see the day
Loving you would go away
You broke her heart, you stomped it dry
You said that there is no time to cry
So go ahead and drink your beer
'Cause she will never reappear

-Hannah, SEF Maricopa County

From The Beat: Hannah...tell us more about this piece. It sounds like you are writing about someone who turns to suicide after losing a love. Who are you writing about...yourself or someone else you know? There is a saying, "It is better to have loved and lost, then to have never loved at all." Why do you think someone may say this? At the time love lost, may feel like dying for, but when you love yourself and realize your value, you know that you can go on to love again eventually. But you are correct that the person they knew will never reappear because you are changed by each love and loss.

Bad Day

Today I called home
And my mama said my lil cousin was gone
He took two to the dome
And one to the chest
They shot him in his heart
He was only 15, he didn't even get to start
This thing that we call life
Ain't life at all
Lil R.O dead while I'm sitting in the hall
But on my daddy grave I'ma stand tall
And them suckas that did this they all gone fall.

-Jesus, Alameda

From The Beat: We're sorry to hear about your boy passing away. Fifteen years old is too young. But that doesn't mean that you have to go out and do the same thing to someone else. Now you're putting your life and freedom at risk. Think about it - if you went out looking for revenge, then there would be more lost lives: The ones you took in your pain and rage, and then your own too, because you'd be swallowed up in the violence. We need you out here, fighting for the peace, not getting caught up in the war.

Life

I'm sitting in my room reminiscing on my life
Wondering why I chose this life of strife
I got two godparents that did whatever
And I can't even do something simple
Like get my life together
Instead I chose to be on the block
Selling drugs in a rainy weather
And what's all that short term stuff
My parents try to give me a life
But I didn't believe and I didn't have trust
Now I'm going down this narrow path by myself
Sometimes I look up in the sky and ask God for help
Now I got to sit back and play the cards I'm dealt
Wishing I could sit down
And tell my momma how I really felt
Wishing I had a time machine so I could go back time
And take away the stress that's going through her mind
I know her biggest fear is me getting shot and dying
I already got hit once
But as you can see God chose for me to stay
But my mama was so hurt
Cause she thought he was going to take me away
When she found out what happened she shaking so bad
She couldn't even put on her shoes
Asking myself "What kind of life did choose?"
But she made it to the hospital and was by my side
Crying her heart out, telling me this is a wake up call
For me to really change my life
Now I'm thinking to myself where can I start
I need to change my direction and stop walking in the
dark Now, this is me poem called life
Where a young man is trying to change
And no longer live in strife.

-Roland, Alameda

From The Beat: It's a very powerful piece/ on describing on how you almost became deceased/ Cause death and jail are the only outcomes of the streets/ So it's really up to you, what you gone do when you're released/ You can change your ways and you change your path/ You can change the future but you can't change the past/ So focus, even though sometimes it might seem hopeless/ You're homies are gonna be like "Drink that, Smoke this." But think about it before you put your freedom at stake/ 'Cause if you wanna change your life, you gotta change the choices you make/

Hurt

Side to side
Back and forth
The razor went
Drip drip drop
The blood goes
Straight red lines
Across my arm
The cuts look ugly
But
The pain is pleasure
The blood is beauty
All I know is my hurt is gone
I have a new pain now
But minutes later
My hurt from before is back

-Anna, Durango, Maricopa County

From The Beat: Many times we feel so much pain in our life we want to turn that pain inward and inflict it on ourselves. The body is loyal to us and serves us well. You might say it's our temple. If your body could question you, it would ask "Why? What have I done to deserve this?" There is a saying that says, "If I knew I was going to live this long I would have taken better care of my bod". We are two-fold-being the mind is the engine, the body is the object or the vessel to carry out desires. Find some other ways to express your anger or hurt. Some outlet, exercise, conversation, or counselors. Writing to The Beat Within is therapeutic, but you should ask for more help.

Something You Always Wanted From Parents But Never Got

Most kids in this country only have one of their parents, because of a divorce, one of them may have died, or one of them walked out on the family when they were little. Well I 'm one of those kids.

My parents got a divorce when I was about one. Since both of my parents were drug addicts they never had enough cash to support me as single parents, so I would always be tossed between the two of them. When one ran out of money I went to the other one and every now and again I would end up at my grandparents.

By the time I was ten both of my parents were clean and started to be responsible. They went to court for custody of me. Well in a nutshell my mom won the case by a landslide and she made sure that my dad could not see me anymore, at least not legally.

When I was old enough to understand I was devastated. I hated my mom for it and held a grudge against her, but since I was only ten, I was easily distracted from my anger, so I easily forgot about things.

When I was thirteen a call reminded me of my anger. My Dad's fiancé called and told me he had a stroke a few months back and was diagnosed with MS, which is a disease where your body eats away its own muscle tissue. Yet again I was devastated and despised my mom even more.

Then I was already a teenager so I started rebelling by doing drugs and not always coming home. Soon enough my mom gave up hope on me. By then I was just turning fifteen and had quite a bit of problems. Instead of treating me like a son. She treated me more like a roommate that had to live in her house until I turned 18. She had no respect for me, but what did I care I hated her.

Today I'm still 15 and turning 16 soon and I 'm in juvenile detention because of my stupidity and drug addiction. I have a lot of time to think in here and I decided to turn my life around when I get out. Although I haven't heard anything about my dad for a few years, I'm starting to accept everything that's happened. I feel I can fix pretty much everything except for one thing and that's the love and respect from my Mom. If I could change anything in the world it would be for her to love and respect me like I was her son again.

-Tyler, SEF Maricopa County

From The Beat: There is a word called empathy-it means to understand someone's position...in your case both parents. It's very difficult being caught in the middle of a divorce or a troubled relationship. What is important to remember is your parents are not perfect, as you admit yourself, everyone makes mistakes, and have a right to be forgiven. You use the word hate, which is a powerful word. Hate is like acid, it eventually destroys the container it is in and everything it touches. Life is a process of growth and making mistakes, so we should not judge. Forgiveness is for the subject and also ourselves-it cleanses us and renews and allows us to start over. There are many people you will meet and you just may not get along with- that is not to say either one of you are bad people. You stated you want your mom's love and respect. I have to ask are you giving her love and respect? In order to get love you must give it. When you get out call a family meeting and ask forgiveness. When a mother says she doesn't love you what she means is, she doesn't love the things you are doing.

*I'm still 15 and turning 16 soon
and I 'm in juvenile detention be-
cause of my stupidity and drug
addiction.*

Daddy

With a head full of pressure of the senses that I clutch
I made a date with divinity, but it didn't work too much
And I got touched by a hazy shade of "God, help me
change"

Although, I knew, my problems were all in my brain
So forget all the drinking and forget all the drugs

All I really need is a talk and a hug
Not just from anyone, but from you, Dad,
I need the love I wanted but I never had
So I wear my scars like the rings on a pimp
And I'm trying to run, but I still have a limp
From all the times you knocked me down
And still I walk around without a frown

So I keep sitting, waiting, and wishing
We could go back to when we went fishing
You stopped listening, when I was, like, five
Do you even realize that I'm still alive?

But through all this, I forgive you, cause you're not the
one to blame

You may not know how, but I keep my feelings tame
So I love you and I just want you to see,
You're my beloved Daddy, and you'll always be.

-Josie, Durango, Maricopa County

From The Beat: Many time parents fail to see what is before them. As you seem to already know love is the most powerful force on earth, not drugs. Everyone wants to be loved. It is good to keep the love of you Dad in your heart. Many times men have a hard time expressing love... and so if you can gather the courage to reach out to him when he seems so distant, you may eventually find the gap between the two of you has disappeared. This world tends to send the message that men should not cry or show their feelings...that it's not macho. We don't agree and believe that it is good for men and women to express grief and love. We commend you for your willingness to be so vulnerable and open to loving your father and receiving love from him.

Living

Living in fear
Living in pain

I wish drugs and alcohol would go away
I know one day I will choose my path
Living my life with family and friends
Or being locked up until time ends
Or worse yet, end up dead

So from now on I am going to keep my head up
Because I know one day everything is going to be fine
Going to have a house on a hill and family on my side
So do not try and judge me, tell me all I do is wrong

I will be telling you to, listen to this song
'Cause 5 years from now, I will have no worries, no stress
You will be on the news-under arrest
So this goes out to all the people who I thought were my
friends

The ones who told me a couple of swigs or hits would
not cause my death

So why was I laying on a hospital bed
With tubes in my arms? there is no more to be said
You knew I was on probation; you should have been a
better friend

But I made that decision, to smoke and to drink
You're nothing to me, you are like the dirt, I will wash
you off in the sink

So now I know who my true friends are
The ones who were there for me and always will be.

-Julie, SEF Maricopa County

From The Beat: What have you learned from these experiences? What will you do in the days ahead to prepare yourself for the new life you envision? How will you meet and build friendships with peers that will help you maintain your freedom?

My Story

Part I

I was born in Berkeley on July 25, 1991 to a beautiful mom and a hustling dad. I lived in South Richmond until I was five years old and then I moved to Oakland and that's where I lived since. I use to go to Hawthorne Elementary School when I was eight years old.

One day some guys tried to rob my cousin Robert, and he tried to rob him he started wrestling with the guy for gun and the gun went off and it hit Robert in the side of his head. He died at Highland Hospital that same night. I was real sad. The dude that shot him was killed two weeks later.

When I was 11 my cousin Tonya aka Tamu got out of jail. She was out for 2 days and then she overdosed on heroin in Albertsons parking lot. (Part I)

I was sad when she died and after that I start going bad. When I was twelve I stole my cousin's gun and left the house cause some dudes tried to jump me at school. I was going to Roosevelt Middle at the time and I seen one of the dudes that tried to jump me and I hit him with the handle of the gun.

I left after that police came to my house. They didn't find the gun though and they had to let me go. When I turned thirteen I started going to Mclymonds High School. One day I cut school with my potna, and we went to steal a car. The first one we broke down, and then we stole another one in then we went to West Oakland and we was up to no good and crashed and I almost died from blood loss.

I was knocked out. Then when I woke up I was at the hospital hooked up to life support. I couldn't move my whole right side. The doctor came in the room with a drill I said what are you gonna do with that he said drill a hole through your leg. I said no you not he said it would help you. I said okay he gave me a shot in my leg.

I couldn't feel nothing. I watched him drill a hole through my leg and I had a big gash on my forehead. And my hand was split where my palm is and every bone in my leg was broken. And my bone came out the back of my leg. I passed out I woke up and my grandmother's preacher had his hand on my head, he was praying for me.

I started crying. My mom came and sat with me.

-Young Mari, Alameda

From The Beat: We put your life story into one long story, because truly, you could write a book about what you've been through, what you've seen, what you've done. You see how every time something bad happened to you, you would 'act out' by going wild and doing something violent? You deserve a better life than what you've had so far. Maybe that's what this hospital visit was about: You almost died. That's a sign right there, because here you are, alive to tell the tale. That's because your life is valuable. You have a lesson to teach, a story to share.

Afraid To Lose My Mom

The person I'm most afraid to lose is my mother because she been there all my life. My mom is the last person I think about losing since I was a baby until now. At that, she did it all by herself. She's also raising three other of my siblings. She struggles every day to make sure that she supports us. My mom is a very strong woman, no matter how much trouble we put her through, she will always be there for us.

If my mom was to die, I wouldn't know how I would be able to live my life. My mom is like the only reason that keeps me here. I have been disrespectful to her -I'm not gone lie- but when it comes down to it, I love her with all my heart. She brought me to this world and therefore she the only one that can take me out.

-Dashawn, Alameda

From The Beat: The death of a parent is such a scary thing for those of us who are lucky enough to have this strong bond with a person who literally gave us life. Your mom sounds like an amazing woman, and she has given you a lot. We hope she gets to read your thoughtful tribute to her.

Everyday Is A Battle

Everyday is a battle

It is something I got to fight

The pain and the tears hit hard

Nothing is ever right, I am the one blamed

For things that I did and have never done

Fighting for my respect, myself, and what I love

If it takes me a lifetime, I am not going to give it up

I have spent my whole life being told I was not good enough

Well I am going to prove to the world, this Chicana has what it takes

Every day is a battle, it is a fight I can take

Even though the tears and the pain may come

I am going to be strong and work with what I got

I do not care what my haters may say

What they try to do to take me down, I am not going to

Stand by and watch another body hit the ground,

I am gonna do what I have to, and not give up

I will break the chain of gang violence and drugs

I got my whole life to live, I got to do what I have to

Make it through these hard times

So the only way I can go is up, I have had enough

-Krista, SEF Maricopa County

From The Beat: You express a strong determination to forge a path for yourself. It is important to recognize that it will take hard work to walk the path you desire to take. Face life and your decisions one day at a time.

Future Realization

25, a famous poet

You've seen my poems

so you know it.

Got off probation about the age of 18

because I decided to do better and follow my dreams.

Full time poet

Full time dancer

You've got a question?

Well I've got an answer.

You ask how'd I do it.

I say because I didn't want to destroy

the rest of my life that can bring me good.

I have a voice, too.

So I did what I should.

Did what I love and became a star.

Shoot...I finally got that Integra '96 race car.

Full time poet

Full time dancer

Full time racer

I followed my dreams and I don't need an eraser.

I made mistakes but made them up.

Ha ha look at me now "miss big stuff"

you can't tell me a fact

that you think is true

because if you want to argue...

watch me pull out a fat stack

from my Spiderman backpack.

25, Full time poet

Full time dancer

Full time racer

Full time me

-Babyboo (Stephanie), Durango Maricopa County

From The Beat: You envision a future of possibilities, adventure, and possibilities and accomplishments. We encourage you to read about, study and learn from others who have achieved similar accomplishments. It may stimulate some ideas about what is needed to make your own dreams a reality

Down On Luck

The most recent experience of feeling down on my luck, was the moment I was arrested and taken into custody. It was a devastating moment because I not only felt completely responsible for my actions I was being taken away from my love ones throwing away promises I had previously made about how I was going to do better.

Currently I'm incarcerated, and everyday is an emotional rollercoaster, a variety of mixed feelings, anxious, stress, sad, ecstatic, irritable, and cool.

Sometimes I just get extremely stressed, because I feel in the dark and just need some clarification on my status, like when am I getting out? Who is my PO? How is my family? Have they found me a placement? It all becomes so stressful, but I manage to pull through each day, and look at it as another day, one less I have to be here. So I'm going to take this time to get my priorities together and work to live up to my promises. Not just for my family, but for me.

-Renesha, Alameda

From The Beat: We couldn't have said it better ourselves. We all seem to make mistakes and we eventually have to face the consequences. It's great that you're taking total responsibility for your actions. Stay focused and don't let anything let you lose site of your goals.

I Don't Want To Lose Myself

When I get out of juvenile, I'm going back to school. I'm going to make up all my lost credits and study for the exit exam. Then I can get my diploma after I pass that test.

The most important person I would not like to lose is myself. I would not want to lose myself to the system and do time, when I could be handling my business on the outs.

-Delano, San Francisco

From The Beat: We think you're right on the money to put yourself at the heart of who and what you don't want to lose, and then figuring out that your diploma and further education are the key to becoming the person you want to be.

Who Are You?

Who I is (I mean, who am I?)

I am Lil' Jon-Jon, a youngster born and raised in the town.

I am a lil' solider who sold dope to be somebody I wasn't.

I am a gold teeth wearin', pistol carryin' warrior from tha Bay

I am the lil' kid on the hood running through people's backyards, runnin' from cops.

I am the lil' ninja all the females loved in fourth grade 'cause of my long hair.

I am a momma's boy, and a daddy's playa.

I am the lil' ninja wit so much knowledge but can't complete a period in school.

I am the lil' ninja who, when I first got my forty-five, wasted all the bullets like an idiot.

I am the lil' ninja who would find the biggest kid to talk smack to, then go get my big brother.

I am the midget that stands out, out of the whole squad.

I am a shark, but I'm fishin' in a pond.

I am the lil' ninja who smacked a knock wit' one arm.

I am Lil' Jon-Jon and I get it how I live, and live how I get it.

-Lil' Jon-Jon, Alameda

From The Beat: You have packed a whole lot of living into your early years. If you imagine writing this piece ten years from now, who are you then? What kind of adventures or life lessons do you imagine you'll have under your belt by then? We'd love to read it.

Like A Bird Love the Sky

My block is all I've ever known

Fast money guns and drugs

Made Fairmont drive my second home

I've dreamed about living lavish though other opportunities

But the hood like a magnet that just keep pulling me

I try real hard to let it go

I love the hood though, like a bird love the sky.

-Neno, Alameda

From The Beat: Wow - we loved the honesty, skill, rhymes and truth of this poem. It's true, you really are hood sick - in a way that might kill you. There's cures for it though - places like Omega Boys Club, the Mentoring Center, Covenant House. Because no bird wants to get caught in a cage, or get shot down out the sky.

Ladies

Don't degrade yourself and put yourself at risk on the streets. God put you on earth to take care of yourself. You can still make a lot of money, as well as fast, but by doing it legal, having fun while getting money, doing something you want and love to do while getting money.

How can standing on the street corner, waiting for some stranger to come pick you up and give you money be fun? Always looking over your shoulder for 5.0. What's fun about that?

Believe me I been through it, I've been pistol whipped, kidnapped, (numerous times) raped, and beat so bad I didn't even recognize myself when I looked in the mirror, even though it's me when I looked in the mirror. Although it went away on the outside, it's still there on the inside. And every time I look in mirror I see myself like that and cry. Everyday I thank God because I could have died.

Don't risk yourself on the streets. Do something worth doing. You only have one life to live. Have fun and don't risk it by risking your own life.

-Angel, Alameda

From The Beat: Excellent advice for those that seem to be walking in the shoes that you once were in. How can you get them to listen? We're sure when you were doing it, you weren't listening to anybody that tried to give you advice. What finally caught your attention? Was it almost losing your life? How can you get the attention of all these young ladies? Tell us what made you wake up?

My Fear

My biggest fear is being alone. I have experience traumatic losses, with love ones and family. It hurts, BAD. I try to keep things like death and dying as a part of reality. It happens...to everyone. I try not to let it be an obstacle of my success.

The gang and street violence I see is becoming something I can't be too sympathetic about because "you live the life you live."

Life isn't fair but it can be beautiful, it's what you make it. Ya know?

The few of my love ones lost happened for various reasons, natural causes, homicides. I will never forget the pain, it still lingers in a small part of my heart. My baby's' father, and my brother were two big tragedies. However, I don't think I'd survive if I lost my husband, my mom, or my son. When the times come, I hope I go with them. But I know I have to live for one, if the other goes, it's just crazy to think about it.

-Renesha, Alameda

From The Beat: You're absolutely right about life being beautiful. Why do you think that people don't see it that way. Everybody acts so careless about life. Why do you think so many young people take their lives for granted?

What's The Point?

What's the point of telling me you'll be there? You know you really won't.
 What's the point of saying you love me? You know you really don't.
 I probably won't ever get the decisions that you make. But don't bother explaining them to me because your explanation is probably fake.
 What's the point of telling lies when I'm not near you?
 What's the point of hurting me? What did I ever do to you?
 I can't count how many times you've made me cry exactly.
 What sucks the most is that you're my only family.
 What's the point of telling me that I'm dismissed?
 Most importantly, what's the point of me writing this?
 I know it will never matter.

-Babyboo (Stephanie), Durango, Maricopa County

From The Beat: You are asking a lot of questions and you are right- you may never know all the answers or get all the answers. There is freedom in asking and expressing your own frustration and pain over past hurts. We wonder if you are able to channel your pain into any more useful endeavors. You are definitely a talented writer.

My Story, Chapter One

To tell you the truth I don't know where to start in my life story ...it's the weed. I can't really remember, but I'll try.
 "Kevin!!! Get yo' ass up and get ready for school!" My mom would say.
 She's my granny though. It's just when I was born which was 1991, Stacey, my biological mom, she wasn't able to take care of me 'cause she was too busy chasin' her next high. So my granny took care of me and my big brother all our life.
 My dad, he was on my mother's hype chasin' that next high. It really didn't matter to me well, 'cause my granny was my mom and dad. She didn't work, she got welfare and section eight. By the time I was nine, it didn't matter to me as long as I was keepin' up with the neighborhood, and who had the flyest shhh.
 I ain't gon' say my mom was perfect but she didn't do anything to me and my brother at first. But I got suspicious when these two people came over my house. Their names were Pizo and Nyema. My mama told me to let them use my room, so me not wanting to get my ass whooped with my mom phone cord, I went to the back.
 Flick. Flick. The noise was comin' from my mom's room. Hey I was nine years old, I was curious. Plus I already had it in my mind what she was doin' in there.
 "Boy!! What you doin'?" My mama yelled. I sprinted back to the couch on the floor.
 "Kevin, bring yo' ass up in here."
 I pretended I was asleep for two more minutes until she demanded me to, and I know when she getting irritated by me, so bein' me I got up and went inside her room. "Yes mama," I said in the calmest way I could.
 "I thought I told you don't come in my room?"
 "I'm sorry mama."
 "What you see?"
 "Nothin' mama."
 "You know what go on in this house stay in this house!?" "Yes mama," I said, tryin' to stick out my bird chest.
 "Take yo' ass to sleep and don't get up unless you goin' to the bathroom," she said.
 Yes mama....

-Kevin, Alameda

From The Beat: The way you tell it too, it's like we're right there with you, in this stressful situation with your mom. You must have had a lot of courage and strength as a young boy, it's almost like you had to raise yourself, and be an adult 'cause your mom couldn't do it. She had too much drama and trouble of her own to know how to take care of you. How do you think all this affected the life you live now?

My Life Story Part Two: Castro Valley

My mother lost the San Leandro apartment; so she moved us in with my Grand mother Sandra, and my uncle John.

My mother was working at a cable company in the time. She had quit her other job as a disk jockey. I started kindergarten when I was six, at Marshall Elementary. There really isn't much to say about kindergarten or the first grade. Both years went by fairly smooth.

Sort of, anyway. I had a few "behavioral issues." I would run away from school, fight with other kids, and throw chairs across the class. Once I even tried to stab a kid with a shard of broken glass. But nothing serious, of course. By the time second grade came, I had begun counseling at the Eden Child Center. I went every two weeks to talk to a woman named Mrs. Hansen.

Around this time, mom was dating Jeff again, so we would stay at Jeff's house. (Actually it was Jeff's mom's house). He still did drugs so by then he ruined his mind. He would talk to himself or he would just stare into space.

Then mom started dating a guy named Joe. It only lasted a few months. After Joe, she dated a guy named Jeff --not the junkster. This guy was a genuine A-hole.

After Jeff she met Cliff, my step dad. The first time I saw him was at the bus stop. That was the only time I saw him with a mustache. Mom picked him up at the bus stop and then we went to a park -- I believe it was called Redwood Park. We had a little picnic. Then we got back in the car and left. During the ride home I wouldn't put on my seat belt, so he pulled over on the freeway, got out, opened my door, and yelled, "keep your f*ckin' seat belt on or I'll beat your ass!"

That's how I met Cliff. My grandmother didn't like him from the start, in fact she still hates him. By the end of my third grade year, Cliff was more or less living with us. I didn't like him at all, and I was very provocative towards him.

When I started fourth grade I started seeing a psychiatrist named Dr. Berney at Eden Child Center. He was quick to diagnose me with A.D.H.D., and I was nine years old when I was put in crap. I also had an I.E.P and I was put in a special ed classroom due to the ADHD (which was later changed to bipolar disorder.). My little brother Jacob, turns out he was also in Special Ed because he was developmentally disabled. He wasn't like confined to a wheelchair or anything. He just had low muscle tone and he can't smile.

I turned ten years old during the fourth grade. The year was 2001. Mom and Cliff were officially engaged, and he had permanently moved in with us. Cliff was the one who would discipline us -- he would do so by beating the crap out of us if we would do anything that he did not like, such as talking at the dinner table, crying, or touching things at the store. When I graduated from the fifth grade in June. We moved into a rented house in Hayward.

-James, Alameda

From The Beat: This second chapter of your life story is even more compelling and disturbing than the first. Where was your mom while all these abusive men were coming in and out of your lives? What did your mom think of the way he treated you? Did you ever talk to her about it? Did any of these people at the treatment center help you, or investigate your home life? Even though you have had some terrible times, we still enjoy reading the installments of your life story - perhaps because seeing that you survived it, and became so devoted to telling your story, is inspiring. If you can do it, other people who have suffered may see that they can do it as well.

My Life, by Marcus

Let me start off by saying was up to all the homies locked down right now. It's a lot of things that happened in my life.

I was raised around a lot of drugs and violence. When I was 5 years old I used to go to this school called Lafayette over there by 21st. That's where I met my first girlfriend. Back then I didn't know what to do, and plus we was way too young. I used to just treat her to some food or something after school.

This one time when school was out me and my older brother went to this girl's house. Her moms said it was cool. This was when I was like 7 or 8. We were in her room just kicked back watching television. Then we started playing hide and seek outside in her gate. Like when I tagged her, I accidentally touched her butt. I thought she was going to get mad but she just smiled, and pulled me towards her. And that's when we kissed.

That's was like my 5th or 6th time kissing a girl. So I was lightweight experienced. But then I noticed I got late, and still had 20 blocks to get home. So by time we got back to the house my mom was hella mad. She had started punching me and my big brother. But I like how she did that. It made me tougher.

When I was in the 4th grade at some dude kept doing hella much. So one day I got fed up. Then one day when I came to school, he had something about my mom. And that's something I really don't like. So I was like, "What you say blood?!" while taking off my shirt.

He was like "you heard me ninja." So I just walked up over there where he was at and hit him dead on his chin. He stumbled and then I threw a sharp right hook. Then he dropped. I stomped him in his face like ten times, then the security grabbed me and took me to the principal's office. I had got suspended for 5 days. When I came back to school, everybody was just staring at me like I was God or something. Then people who never talked to me wanted to talk to me. I was just thinking in my head, like these is some fake ass ninjas. I guess they thought that I won't ever get down because I was always silent. Unless I'm talking to a female.

But even when I was at the school I used to kick it, with the amigos. It's in my blood. You could say I grew up with 'em, 'cause during most of my free time I hung out with them. When I was in the 6th grade, people tried to push my buttons. But they seen I wasn't going out to any body. Like I always say I don't care how big you is, how strong you is, who you are, or where you from, I ain't goin' out. And if I say I'm go do something and I put that on somebody I love, best believe I'm go do it. By doing that you can earn respect from a lot of people. You just got to have heart.

When I was in the 8th grade, I had met this beautiful Mexican girl named Joseline. When I had first came to school in the eighth grade, that's the first girl I noticed. She had this red fit on with some black and red Jordan 7's on. For a while I was just watching her waiting for the time to come up. So I was askin' people do they know who that girl is. They was telling me no. Then I asked my potna Jesus, and he told me that was his cousin. So I was like

"Fo real?!"

He said, "Yeah cousin." Then he paused for a second, then he asked me "Why?" At first I didn't know what to tell him, because I thought he was gon' get mad. But then I said I wanted to hook up with her when lunchtime came. I was walking towards the basketball court, when all of a sudden I hear somebody call my name. I thought I was hearing things but then some one yelled out "Marcus!" And I seen it was Jesus calling me. He was sitting on the bench by the monkey bars with Joseline. So I walked over there and I was like "was sup with it."

He nodded his head sideways where she was sitting at. Then I looked at her and got lightweight shy. He said "Sit down." I sat next to him and he was like it's your chance to talk to her. He got up and said I'm bout to go to the bathroom. After a couple of seconds of thinking I said "What's your name?"

She said, "Joseline, but my friends call me Josy."

I asked her here she was from she told me. After talking to her for a couple of minutes, I had left. The next day I had wrote her like a little letter and it was just asking her question about her and whatever. I had gave it to Jesus to give to her. Then when lunch was over, when I was on my way to math class, he had handed me a folded paper that said on the front: From: Josy To: Marcus

I ain't gone lie -- I was juiced, 'cause I didn't know whether or not if she was going to write back. After that we kept writing each other, just to keep our relationship on the DL. That's something we have in common, is that we don't like everybody in our business. We was talking on the phone like everyday. We used to stay after school for some program, but we didn't really used to go to it like that. I used to cupcake with her in the hallways or on the playground in the cutty bo's. I only did that because her parents would not let her have a boyfriend and she can't really go places by herself. But I didn't really care too much about it.

But the thing I was worried about is what if her brother Saul/my potna find out about our relationship. After two months we been together the word started to get around in school that I was messing with Josy. Then ninjas started to hate on me talking about all he wants to do is get in your jeans, he ain't faithful. He cheated on another Mexican girl named Darlene. What makes you think he wants to do the same for you. I guess that got to her head, next thing I know she was asking me a million questions. So one day when I was with her brother in front of their house. We was drinking Corona's back to back. And when I got drunk I spilled my guts. I told him that I talk to his sister and I'd been talking to her for a while. And like a couple of days later my potna told me that she couldn't mess with me anymore. I asked him why and he said she said she didn't say nothing when he asked her why. So for a couple of minutes I was just sitting down in front of my potna house like a statue. I was just thinking about it.

-Lil' Marcus, Alameda

From The Beat: Oh no, Marcus, don't leave us hanging! What happened next? This is a great story - and it really broke down how you came up, what it's like being a child, and then a young man, in a world full of violence and adult situations. We can't wait for part two, to find out how things worked out with Josy, and also to hear more about your insights on life in general.

I was raised around a lot of drugs and violence. When I was 5 years old I used to go to this school called Lafayette over there by 21st. That's where I met my first girlfriend.

No Role Model

I never really had a role model when I was younger, but now that I look at the present I looked up to Mac Dre, Messy Marv, Keak Da Sneak, the reason why is all I ever had was a radio and some CD's.

My dad has never been around. I got tied in the struggle of having no money as a youngster so I got more tuned what they were talking bout and I was in the same struggles as I grew older.

Another role model are chemicals that I depend on. I never watched sports or played them. My real role model at 10 years old was E & J bottles I stole. And marijuana I smoked with my cousins.

I never had a role model I actually looked up to. I always felt like a lone man. I really am my own role model. My mind refuses to let me look up to anyone. I might take pieces of what I need from a person's style and ways but never a copy of someone.

-Lil Young, Alameda

From The Beat: Looking up to somebody doesn't necessarily mean that you want to copy somebody. A role model doesn't really have to be one person specific. Like you can like all the positive things about a person and try to emulate it, but you don't have to think like them or have the same opinion as them. You can be your own person and still have a role model. For example if your role model makes mistakes, you might not want to repeat them. You might just want to learn from their mistakes so you won't have to experience it first hand.

What if?

What if I call heaven and they never answer the phone?
What if I call them tomorrow and they say that nobody's home?

Does that mean I wasted my call, and there just gone?
Or does it mean I'm living wrong?

I hope that they have star 69 so they can call my phone,
If I don't answer, please leave a message at the sound of the tone,

It sounds funny but what if you spoke to your peeps?

One you lost ago, or one you lost last week

Would that voice make you strong or make you weak?

Would you fall to the ground, tears burning down your cheek?

Would you scream out love or be afraid to speak?

Or continue to write poems that make you think?

Down to your souls, till your bones hurt,

One phone call

Please make sure that your phone is working!

-Lil' Mang, Alameda

From The Beat: Wow. Based on this piece, we're taking a guess you would find your voice, and you'd either craft it into another blazing poem, to make us all think, hurt, and finally scream out love. As for calling heaven, if at first you don't get them, dial louder!



I'll Never Make It Out The Hood

The things that made me who I am today...I personally call it growing up in rough times. When I was growing up, it was just my mom and her six kids: three boys, three girls. We were going through very rough times in those days.

There was times when we had nothing to eat, times when we had to ask our friends for food. There was times when we thought we would never make it out the hood. Those times made us hard. Those times made us show no tenderness at all. Those times made us into great people that know what it feels like not to have nothing at all. But when we finally made it up out the hood, it felt like we won the lottery. It made us feel like we were somebody.

I guess that's why I love life to the fullest and go all out, because I finally made it out the hood. Sometimes I go back and think that I am back in the hood. It's like no matter where I go, I'm always be in somebody's hood. I always thought it would be cool but I woke up and realized hat I'll never make it out the hood.

-Big Stewy, Alameda

From The Beat: When we were reading your piece, we felt so happy for your family and felt great respect for you for making it out of the hood and learning to appreciate life to the fullest. But then, at the end, you write that you have discovered that you are "always in somebody's hood" and that you will never make it out. This raises all sorts of interesting questions. Is the whole world a hood? Is the hood a state of mind? Is it impossible to really leave the hood when you're a young black man? Did you learn that the hood is actually where you want to be? We are eager to hear more of your thoughts on the subject.

Alla This Madness

I try not to hold up, try not to give in,
It's hard livin' in a world filled with sin,

So many hungry babies,

Men who hate they ladies,

All the madness drivin' me crazy,

It took some time for me to look through better eyes,

As the world of opportunities rules by

Alla the stars, glittering cars and yet,

I failed to realize that there's more than meets the eye,

Ashes, to ashes, dust to dust it's now or never until we bust,

Man we gotta change our ways,

In these crazy days,

Remember 3:16, that's what Jesus say,

In these down times I'm praying for peace,

I wanna be a better daughter, be a better niece,

So many things to change,

Don't want to stay the same,

Wanna make big bucks, people call my name,

And as I ride through the stormy weather,

I know that soon thing are going to get better,

I won't live my life in vain,

Remember that when you say my name.

-Lady Awesome, Alameda

From The Beat: We will remember everything you ask us to, we'll remember your struggle, your faith, your hope, and finally, we'll remember this poem, which lives up to your name because it's... awesome.

*I say we the most dangerous state.
 They say things gonna change but
 ain't nothin' happenin'.*



Shhh Don't Change

What's the point of havin' a President, Mayor, Governor?

Well, to tell you da truth it's all b-s. I mean why have them if nothin' ain't changin'? Shhh just keep getting worser and worser.

So just fahgit it, they ain't doin' nothin'. They just speakin' out of their mind. Words ain't nothin' until it happens.

For example, look at California! I say we the most dangerous state. They say things gonna change but ain't nothin' happenin'. But I don't care, 'cause I'm gonna do what I do until I drop down in my casket.

(The Beat asked: WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE, IF YOU COULD?)

How can I change things? I can't change things because I ain't got no power to change things. I wish I could. LOL. Well I'm just an average hood ninja, just livin' another turf life. I'm jus' out here in Oakland getting my money and girls, the way a hood ninja live. That all I got to say so I'ma get ghost.

-Lil' Rondale, Alameda

From The Beat: When you say "I can't change things" what we hear is "I don't matter." Because of course you can change things, IF YOU BELIEVE YOU CAN. That is what the heroes of history are, they are people who believe in their power, even if the world and logic tell them otherwise. But first, you have to find the strength, inside, to believe that you have a bigger and better future for yourself than hood life. That you have it in you to be a father, a friend, a son to be proud of, a high school graduate, a professional, a homeowner. You're only as small as your dreams.

Las Mentiras No Sirven

Todos nosotros creo que hemos pasado por algo así, pero aveces uno se siente como si todo se le complica derrepente. Yo he mentido en cosas grandes, pero cuando voy a mentir lo hago por necesidad.

Le pido a mi Diosito primero que me perdone. Que todo me salga bien.

Cuando miento solo cierro los ojos y espero lo que pase. Si se descubre la verdad, estoy en problemas.

He tenido que mentirle a mi familia, pero creo que hay veces en el que tienes que hacerlo.

Yo conozco a un amigo y a otras personas que le hacen abusos. Por ejemplo, un amigo fue abusado por su padre. Su padre lo golpiaba y lo castigaba a cada rato. Creo que no esta bien porque no hay razón porque golpiarlo.

Creo que un padre y una madre tienen que educar a su hijo primero y enseñarles como hacer todo. Enseñarle que algún día va a crecer y creo que no sería bien porque cuando uno crece, le quedan los recuerdos o recores que se hace difcil a una familia que sicatrice en el alma. Estas son cosas que no se olvidan ni que uno vuelva a nacer.

From The Beat: Estas en lo cierto, las mantiras no lleban a nada bueno mas que complicar las cosas. Hay un dicho que dice, "que este mundo todo se sabe porque el mundo es pequeño." Con respecto a tu amigo, deberias de aconsejarlo a que no permita más esos abusos. Nadie tiene el derecho de ser abusado de la forma como el lo es. Su padre puede meterse en problemas serios si sigue actuando de esta manera.

Lies Never Work

We have gone through things like this before, but sometimes things get more complicated. I have lied for big things. When I lie, I do it for a good need.

I ask God to forgive me and to have things go well for me.

When I lie, I just hope the lie to work. If it doesn't work, I'll get in trouble. I have lied to my family because there are times when you have to.

I have a friend and other people who have been abused. My friend was abused by his father. His father used to hit him and punish him all the time. I think that there wasn't right because there is not reason to hit him.

I think that parents have to educate their kid first and teach them how to deal with everything. They should teach them that some day they grow up. I think that's wrong because when you grow while being abused, the bad memories and grudges remain in you and is hard for anyone to erase that big scar. These are things that are hard to forget not even if you re-born again.

-Elvin, San Francisco

From The Beat: You are right, lies doesn't help at all but to complicate more the situation. There is a saying that goes like this, "everything comes to light because this is a little word. Referring you friend, you should advice him not to allow his father to abuse him the way he is. Not one person has to right to abuse another one at any way. His father can get into serious trouble with the law if he continues acting this way. Let him know that!

*How can I change things?
 I can't change things be-
 cause I ain't got no power
 to change things.*

Who's That?

Every time I take a look I see hate in yo' eyes,
 Then I look again, I see nothing but lies.
 A hopeless person just tryna find his way,
 Speeding through life, you can tell he snorts yay,
 Little scars and scratches, he's been in rough fights,
 Bags under his eyes, he doesn't sleep at night,
 And he must be stressing, look at his facial expression,
 He always looks real mad or in deep depression,
 Sometimes I can see fear, but this person can't show it,
 He's had his dreams broke one at a time,
 And he knows it, he has the eyes of a snake
 The face of a killer
 The face I'm lookin' at is the person in the mirror.

-Angelo, Alameda

From The Beat: Look at that person again, look at his eyes. They've been hurt, and like you say there's pain that he can't show.... But do you also see the success, the person who scored in the top 5 percent of readers on his test? The person with plans for a job waiting on him when he gets out of jail? The person who is quiet when it comes to reading out loud in workshop but is bold on shows incredible heart on paper? Do you see how this person still has dreams that can't be broken, that won't be broken? If you don't see him — look harder, he's there.

Misled

This lifestyle that I led
 The drugs that I take
 Are all getting to my head
 Making me think that soon I'll be dead.
 Laying on my bed, wishing I was dead
 The people I hung around with
 I let them take me and was misled.
 Getting dragged day by day
 Minute by minute into the gang
 I have no regret for it
 But wish I could take it back.
 Soon to be a dad.
 I double think about all that
 Wanna be all good not bad
 Wow if I'm not there
 For my kid
 Tell me what kind of dad is that?

-Klvr, Alameda

The Beat: There's still time to be there for our child — there's still time to find a new way to live in this world, to build on the things you've learned. One day you might reread this amazing poem and see it as a turning point in your life, from bad to better.

It's Me Again

Y'all gone get tired of seeing my name
 My pencil took over and it's going insane
 Joy wouldn't feel good if it wasn't for a pain
 Man I could be a rapper
 I'm gone always be myself
 And never be an actor
 My words so bold and heavy like a tractor
 To do something with my life that's what I'm chasing
 after And soon to capture its always a before and after
 In a story writings by fakes bore me
 The ladies, they adore me
 I'm stacked up with writings something like the store be
 People listen when I talk
 They use to ignore me y'all
 I'm sharper than a sword be
 I'm the greatest so y'all should award me.

-Young Mari, Alameda

From The Beat: We never get tired of seeing your name/ as long as you speaking something tight and not talking bout something lame/ But we aint awarding you nothing that you don't really deserve/ what you need to do is stop selling that stuff on the curb/ cause it's gonna bring you write back here writing these lines/ When you should be in the studio recording your rhymes/

Who am I?

I am a young soldier with a messed up past,
 I know that I am fasho' to make tons of cash,
 Though I live running from the law enforcers,
 I stay steady wit' my motto:
 No surrender, no retreat, I rather die in the middle of the street,
 Then being trapped in a cage, my acts of rage,
 Then turned rebel
 I'm not scared to cocktail cop cars,
 I don't fear death no matter which way it comes,
 I am stranded in the slums of my hell,
 I smoke weed so I can block the dwell,
 Of bad memories, trying to smoke my thoughts away,
 and numb my pain with the white,
 Which can be pretty destructive to me and my surroundings,
 I know who I am but the judge thinks he got me exact,
 He silenced my voice when he put me in this cage,
 That's why I stay strapped with the guage,
 So when the police come to get me,
 I holla I'm not letting y'all take me to no penitentiary,
 So you can say I'm a rebel and fasho' I agree,
 I'm going to be free either way dead or alive.

-Lil' Young The Rebel, Alameda

From The Beat: If you really are the rebel you claim, then don't just do what they expect. They EXPECT you to shoot, to rage, to self-destruct. What they don't expect is that you might decide to beat them at their own game and become a success in life. Why not go to school, work to mobilize the block, change things and make the situation better? Don't just be a rebel — be a revolutionary.

A Plan For A Better Future

The reason why they call me Cash is because I get money. So that's what defines me. The things I've done to get the name I'm not proud of, but I hold it down because it's who I am. Grinding twenty-four- seven just to feed my seed. Most of the people say its wrong but its all a young thug know.

Right now I'm trying to find myself, get my life on the right track and be a better person. When I get out hopefully on the ankle monitor, I plan on getting a job and finishing my 12th grade year in high school. This is who I am.

-Cash, San Francisco

From The Beat: We admire you for putting finishing school at the top of your "to do" list. It's critical to achieve the life you're hoping for. You say you have to grind 24/7 "to feed your seed," but we imagine your seed is eating now, even though you've handed your freedom away. So there must be other ways to put food on the table than to risk everything by allowing yourself to be taken from those that love you.

Close To My Parents

Someone I'm afraid to lose is my parents! I don't know where I'd be without them. They've done so much for me, my whole life. We didn't used to get along and was always arguing. That was going on for a couple years, then finally I jus' realized that they did what they did 'cause they cared. Then I started caring more and we started getting along better. I tell them everything. I'm so close with them now. I don't know what I would do if I lost them. I love them too much to even think about anything happening to them or losing them.

-Sarah, San Francisco

From The Beat: It sounds like you did lose them, temporarily, but that you've rediscovered them, and now you recognize what a treasure you have in them. You are also their treasure, so now it's time to pay back some of what you owe. That's not money; it's you they want. We know they'll want to read this sweet tribute, but we also know that more than words, they want you with them.

Love Is. . .

Love is like chocolate, it's rich and divine,
 But love is different in everyone's mind.
 Love is like the ocean, it's big and it's vast,
 And love is like a race car, revved-up and fast.
 Unfortunately, some love doesn't always last.
 Love is like a newborn, gentle and warm,
 Love is like the great feeling when you're in someone's arms.

Love is not always so pretty
 Sometimes you love someone just out of pity,
 Or maybe it's because they tell you you're pretty.
 Love is something that we all feel,
 Because love is something we all know is real.

-Josie, Durango, Maricopa County

From The Beat: I think you hit the nail on the head when you said love is different in everyone's mind. We need to be sure of what someone is saying when they say "I love you". "Is it just for the moment?" "Do you only want something from me?" Because love is such a powerful emotion, it clouds our thinking, and we rarely ask these questions. We need to back up, clear our heads and look behind the veil.

I Want Her To Know I Made It

The person I am most afraid to lose is my mom. I am scared to lose her. I need her here with me. I need her love and support to help me with my life. I will feel so alone and lost without her. I love her. I do not want to live in this world without her, but I know she has to go someday. I just don't want it to be any time soon. If she has to go, I want her to go when I have a decent job, wife, kids and she is old, so she can go with a smile on her face, knowing I made it through this atrocious life.

-Lil' Roach

From The Beat: If you love your mom this much, just think how much she loves you and wants you with her where you belong. We hope you can give her what she wants.

My Past

I was once caught up in the dope game,
 Thinking my life-style will never be the same
 Walking in circles with nowhere to go
 Trying to keep my head as I continue to ride solo
 Cherishing each and every moment as if it were my last
 That's the lifestyle I chose, for I grew up way too fast!
 Hustlin' the streets, always on the grind,
 Looking for love, but could never find
 My so-called homies putting a gun to my head,
 Not pulling the trigger, but getting pistol-whipped instead!
 Still not giving a shhhjust tryin to get high,
 Thinking about my life then I started to cry.
 These tears I cry are bitter and warm,
 I don't believe these tears took any form
 These tears have a good excuse,
 But to cry in front of people I refuse
 Regretting everything I've said and done in the past,
 Damn, now I think about it, it was all for a blast!
 Telling my mom I'm sorry as I gently wipe the tears from her eyes
 Whispering in her ear, "I'll be here 'til the day that we die!"

-Krystal, Durango, Maricopa County

From The Beat: Many times we feel we are the only ones to experience problems. There is a saying that goes like this, "there is nothing new under the sun". The artificial life has always been attractive to us. A mirage seems very real until we get close enough to see real from false. The street life is not real. However, your mother is. Forsake what is false for what is real, and remember what's important...for your mom.

My Best Friend

There was a point and time towards when I had a good friend named "Bam" that I met around beginning of my 17th birthday, we noticed that we shared a lot in common, as in we both been in jail, didn't have a dad, and nobody to really depend on but ourselves, so we got real close. We come to find out we thought alike in our own deadly ways -- he had a temper problem, I needed anger management and we took that into consideration by throwing our hate towards people we didn't care about... which was anybody.

And my mom thought he was a bad role model on me, which he wasn't because I felt he was just like me . He was just four years older than me, but I didn't care what nobody thought about him, because I seen a lot of me in him and he seen the younger him in me so we got close and forever will be.

-Ronnie, Alameda

From The Beat: That's coo that you and your friend are hella close. But it also seems like you're just teaching each other more and more bad ways of dealing with your issues. It's like you're bringing out the worst in each other - taking hate out on other people, being violent... that's just gonna destroy you both. Here you are, in jail - why don't you use this time to figure out where all that anger comes from, so you can find a way to deal with it that won't get you locked up?

The Truth

Police want to hate
 And put me in this place
 'Cause I get paper great
 And go hard on the fake
 And when I'm on my paper chase
 You can't eat off my plate
 I lay down at night and cry
 Sometimes feeling so painful
 And at times wanting to die
 But Lord, why?
 And believe it or not
 I continuously try
 To survive
 And abide
 By simple rules....
 But yet I get caught up
 To feel like a fool
 But, shhh, at times
 A life of crime
 Really rule
 Keep my pride and dignity
 While tryin' to keep it cool
 But what slipped my mind
 Is that education is a tool
 I get dividends
 Trusting family
 No friends
 And because I live in sin
 I'm stuck wit' girls that pretend
 In the hall
 All because of a crime I was in
 Tryin' to win
 From now on
 I will think before I act
 Try to legitimately get racks
 Put down the gats
 And that's a fact.

-Kalei, Alameda

From The Beat: Excellent flow. You're right there's a legitimate way to do things. You can ball and get money the legitimate ways. You don't have to put your life in danger or risk your freedom to get that cash. You can get money the legitimate way. There are all kind of legitimate hustles.

New-New, Bright And Dark

Part 1

The Beat asked me what I would think of having a black president, and I say it would make me feel good, because they blacks are not everywhere. It always be the white man.

I hope this goes into the black history books. I hope people can see what we been trying to do for the long time. I think it's a miracle black people have a chance in the small world. I give them my respect. I think that what they doin' is what black people was tryin' to do a long time ago.

White people say we can't make it. White people think black people are very dumb. So this shows that we can be anything in the world. Now we can teach white people that we can do what they can. And it's not about what color they are - black, blue, pink, white.

Part 2

It all started when I was 10 years old. I lost my virginity, and then I started acting like I was grown. I started hanging out in the streets with my cousins and bra's.

I earned my nickname when my cousin Leon introduced me to his gang. So I started acting like a straight-up tomboy, I started sellin', putting girls on the track. I started doing drugs.

I get money that's what you need to know about New New. I sell anything and anything move.

I tell a ninjas I can show you better than I can tell you. My cousins know I move from big guns to little guns. I'm in this game forever, and nobody can stop me, unless you shoot me. I never lost a fight, and I never will. Leon taught me how to be on shhh.

So if you see me you better talk about money or I will have my hands over my ears. This '08 I get money for sure. My older brother taught me the street.

No boy, no girl can play me like a PS3.

-New New, Alameda

From The Beat: We put your two pieces together, because they taught us so much about the war you must be fighting inside yourself. There is one part of you that is full of pride in yourself, and belief that you are capable of much more than the outside world thinks. It's a piece that MLK himself would be proud to lead. Then there is this other side of you that seems really bent on hurting herself, the way someone hurt you when you were ten. You don't need to fall victim to the despair of the street. You are too good and strong for that! Tell us more about these two sides of you, which you show in your two pieces? Which side do you think will "win"?

All of the Above

Who am I
I'm solid
I'm hood
I'm true

What are you?
Have you seen what I've seen?
Can you do what I do
Put yo' self in my shoes
It's about me not you

Who am I
I'm smart
I'm funny

I got a lot of money
The street's cold even when it's sunny
When you on the block you try not to be clumsy
Make one mistake and you fall like a dummy

Who am I?
I am all the above
I am me, and that's all I could be

-Ricky Rick, Alameda

From The Beat: We want to hear more about who you are! And especially what you've seen, what you've been through, and mostly where do you want to go? Where do you see yourself headed?

Cheating

I use to go with this girl name Jasmine a lil while back. She was like 5'4, 102lbs, a thick lil girl. She was 18 years old. I went out with her about 6 months. About two months after we started talking I cheated on her, with this girl at my school. The other girl name was Christiana, almost same class every day.

She told me she loved me about a week after we started going together, so I asked her to buy me some white tee's. She said OK so we hit the bus and went to this store down town next to Footlocker. Just as we got off the bus, Jasmine's sister saw us. She took a picture of us kissing as she got on the bus.

Two days later I'm at Jasmine's house. We ain't doing nothing except cupcaking and kissing. I thought I was bout to get some. Then she pulled out a phone that didn't look like hers outta her pocket. She showed me the pic and asked me who this was. I told her it was my ex tryna talk to me. Then she showed me the pic of me and Christiana kissing, and asked me what about that.

I told her we was just hugging, then I thought she believed me.

After she didn't believe what I said cause her sister came in and told her we was kissing. She broke up with me. She started yelling at me and tried to hit me. She hit me once and I told not to do it again. I don't hit girls but I dropped her when she tried it again. She got up and started throwing shh at me and I bounced out. Now I got Christiana and still talk to Jasmine.

-Jason, Alameda

From The Beat: No disrespect, but straight up: How would you feel if your girl was cheating on you? Wouldn't feel too good, would it? You say you don't hit girls, but you don't seem to mind hurting them - and why would you try to get some girl to buy your shirts? Come on, we know you were raised better than that!

My Struggle

I struggled as a youngun'
With responsibilities as an adult
Raising three children
I struggled for hope

Prayin' one day my pain would be free
Molested, beat, raped,
Wishing it wasn't me.

I struggle to get back what could never be
The relationship with my father I wish he had with me
I struggle today with no discipline or direction

I lost my way into the system and jail
Which is designed to make me fail
Rebelled is what I did and I don't know why
I struggle to show I'm a good and smart person
But mistakes, paperwork, and jail time is what I'm judged by

Why, I ask myself, do I have to struggle so much?
Why do I have to feel the enormous space of air
Between me and my mother's touch?

I took the time to think.
Think is what I should of done a long time ago
My struggle wouldn't have been so hard,
And that I know.

It came to me, what doesn't kill me will make stronger,
Now my struggle I will fear no longer.

-Katie, Alameda

From The Beat: With the skills you show here, you could be a teacher/ or maybe a spiritual leader and preacher/if a girl was struggling it's you who could reach her!

If I Had Done

As I get older and older
 It seems like life
 Gets colder and colder
 Can't take no more
 Everyone bounced
 And left the weight of world on my shoulders,
 To match the stress, I'm tip-toed onto my ledge,
 Having to make a choice,
 That could lead to my very death,
 My life is hanging by a thread,
 I could see it now,
 My life is hanging by a thread,
 Nowhere to turn, and nowhere to run,
 Walking into a thin line,
 Baked into a corner holding 45's,
 I could have taken the coward's life that night,
 I made a choice, I made a choice and I did right,
 I saw a cop, and I ran for my life,
 Thirty days later, caught doing some time,
 If I pulled that trigger, it could of cost my own life.

-Ace, Santa Clara

From The Beat: You did the right thing by not pulling that trigger. Maybe another innocent life could have been taken if you had done it. Take the remaining time you have in here to think about what life is all about, and the purpose of your existence in this world. Like you've said, time is passing by and you are getting older and older. Now it's time for you to make your own choices, choices that can be beneficial to your life, choices that can guide you to have a better future for a better life. It could have been worst. Trust us! Time of reflection!

I Miss My Big Brother

A lost of a role model to me would be my older brother. Today my brother went to court to see if he was going to get 2-3 years. That might not sound like much, but when you have a three-year-old daughter, it's forever.

He didn't really know what he did, until they said 2-3 years and finally he opened his eyes. He just became manager at his job, been going to anger management classes, and just doing well.

Want I want to say is that, what I never said is I love you Jess keep your head up and I promise, I'll make sure that you always have money on your books. Keep out of trouble and do what you have to do, see you soon.

-Adam, Alameda

From The Beat: Thanks for sharing this story with The Beat, Adam. It's terrible when someone has been taking a lot of steps to improve their life and STILL has to face the law for things that happened before they changed. What happened? Did he get the time? Have you been in touch? Has he asked you to watch out for his niece while he's gone?

Can a Black Man be President?

Can a black man president? That's what I like to ask myself. I think we need a black president because the United States needs an outlook that comes from coming up from a struggle and making it, not just having it.

I have a strong belief, the white man likes to say "all black people think alike" Plus if you were president, thinking about people that that way, just off of your own faith, you will put your country in great jeopardy.

So I damn sure think that a black man could be president, and a damn good one too.

At that, keep doing what you're doing, Barack Obama. Much support.

-Majia, Alameda

From The Beat: As always Majia, you have a fresh and positive outlook on things, and we agree that a black man could be "a damn good" president. But one thought - you are right to condemn the idea that a person could think "all black people think alike." But it almost sounds like you believe all white people think alike (against black people). Is that true? Has that been your experience in life? Tell us more!

Building Karma

Someday, I would write about my life. Since I'm living hard and raw as hell, a lot of crazy things have happened in my life. It's not only about being in juvenile hall. There are a lot of senses that are related with "karma." Everything I have learned in my life.

If I'm doing the good things, good things return to you. But if I'm doin' the bad things, bad things come in return. It is not like if I do bad things then do the good things to make up. Karma grows in separate from negative actions and positive actions. Each of them grows gradually. The problem was that I was raised in low economics that start from the scratch like rags to riches.

I grew up in the 'hood, and I'm one step behind than everybody else. I did the wrong way because I needed to do something to make money. Sometime I get in troubles. I'm struggling with my life trying to live the poverty line, but I need to play by the rules. It's what makes my life challenging and full of complex.

I write rap lyrics to pour my heart out in music. Even though I'm deaf but I got love for the rap game. One day when I publish this book, I hope y'all gonna read it. I'm most afraid to lose my freedom. I want my freedom and I need it to function straight.

-Krishna, San Francisco

From The Beat: We would love for you to bless us with a few of your rap lyrics, especially if they are as full of excellent advice and information as this piece is. How long have you been writing your book? What is the hardest thing about trying to play "by the rules"? What's your plan for when you leave this hall?

Mi Madre Querida

Yo tengo miedo de perder a mi madre. Ella es la que yo más quiero en esta vida. Aveces me pongo a pensar que pasaría si algún día me faltara mi madre. Yo no quiero que me le vaya a pasar algo. No quiero ni siquiera pensarlo. Yo sé que algún día me puede pasar eso porque ella padece del corazón.

Tampoco quisiera que mi madre me viera morir o algo así. Me gustaría que el día que ella muriera yo también muriera al mismo tiempo porque no me gustaría verla morir.

Sólo le pido a Dios que me la cuide mucho y que no me le pase nada. Le pido también que me cuide también.

From The Beat: Entonces deberías de estar con ella en estos momentos. Si ella está enferma, deberías de cuidarla y darle el mejor tiempo de su vida. Demuestra cuanto la amas con hecho, no sólo con palabras. Gracias por tus palabras. Estamos seguros que tu madre debe de pensar igual que tú. Creemos que también desearías que fueras un gran y responsable hombre.

My Dear Mother

I fear to loose my mother. She's the one I love most in this life. Sometimes I think what I would do if some day I loose her. I don't want anything to happen to her. I don't even want to think about it. I know someday, this could happen because she suffers from the heart.

I wouldn't also like my mother to see me die or something like that. I would like to die the same day she dies because I wouldn't like to experience her death.

I only ask God to take care of me and not let anything happen to her. I also ask Him to take care of me.

-Jose Adan, San Francisco

From The Beat: Maybe you should be there with her right now. If she's sick, you should take care of her and make an effort in making her last days happy. Show her how much you love her with actions, not just words. Thank you for your words. We are sure that your mother would want the same thing as well. But before that, she would want to see you as a great and responsible man.

My Gurl

I'm dedicated to my gurl.
 I can't stay away, 'cause she's my whole life,
 I'm wit' her every day, and she got me goin' crazy.
 So I'm holdin' my strap, they tryna get at her,
 so you know I cock back and I bust.
 For my gurl it's a must,
 I'm never letting anything come between us,
 And she's grimy sometimes, that's just how it is.
 But I can't let her go, no matter how it gets,
 She'll be there through thick n thin. All day and all night.
 Not a second away, and she's never missed a fight,
 Never taught me to do right,
 And one day my mom said, if I stay wit' this gurl,
 I'ma end up dead, but I never listened,
 I was wit' her every day, they was getting at her,
 But I got hit wit' the K
 Now I'm layin' in her arms hella bloody and hot.
 For bein' around my gurl – the block.

-Angelo, Alameda

From The Beat: Romeo and Juliet was a tragedy, because they loved each other so much, and the world wouldn't let them be together. But this tragedy you describe here is much worse: A Romeo who dies without a Juliet. The block is a b\$\$%, a piece of rock owned by someone else. Find a "woman" who deserves your love. A woman worth fighting for, dying for, living for. She needs a name – call her "The Future"

Football and A Barber's License

Where I see myself in ten years is like is like a five-year veteran of the NFL.

That's where I see myself -- as a professional football player. I have the talent to go somewhere, but I'm always doing some dumb stupid crap, and getting myself locked up. I'm at camp and I'm going to knock this time out, and go back to school and play football. I'm going to make it somewhere, but I have to stay focused. I also want to go to school and get my barber's license so I can get something to fall back on. To every locked up peeps where ever you at, keep it solid. Real respect, I'm out.

-El, Alameda

From The Beat: What's great about your plan is that you are showing two sides of yourself – the practical side that understands the importance of insurance, and the bold side that is not afraid to aim high and dream big dreams! We hope that you achieve both these goals.

What Happens At The End

You never know when that day comes, but you owe me your life.

I need it fast or something important to you gonna get took.

Is that worth it?

You wanted to be big and live like a jigga,
 but at the end, when you behind them bars, you
 wondering who bigger.

Tears, pain, and love is what you gon' see if I don't get my money.

You got loved ones, right? You love them, right? But remember that night I loaned you that white and you took it, right?

Now we about to fight.

My love for money is way deeper than us.

Now we face-to-face and I thought I could rely on you,
 but it was too good to be true. Now what we supposed to do?

I'm 'bout to fuss. The only thing on my mind is to just bust.

-H, Alameda

From The Beat: Sounds like a deal gone wrong. We hope that you will settle your score with this person in a peaceful way and/or move on. No drugs or money are worth giving up your freedom to sit in a jail cell with only your regrets to keep you company.

Someone I'm Afraid To Lose

Someone I am afraid to lose is my son, also my mother, or my little brother... that would be a nightmare to me! They're the most valuable people I have. I feel like I'm nothing without them. I already feel like I've lost them, even though I really haven't. But being away from my son for almost four months! It's a feeling that I can't even explain how it feels.

It's been really hard even for them, too. I hear my son all the time in my dreams. I always hear him saying, "Mommy, please don't leave me any longer." I hear him cry all the time. It breaks my heart, knowing that my baby boy misses me so much. It's unexplainable: I love him so much! He's everything to me!

Today I got sentenced and I gotta do six months! Then I got to go to a program for a year an' a half! Got to be on probation for five years. It's cool, though. Just got to stay strong and keep my head up! That goes to all you homies that are locked up, doing time! Stay strong! This is just a life lesson, you feel me? All right, Beat, I'm out!

-Monstrita, San Francisco

From The Beat: Some mistakes have very long-term consequences which you just have to deal with and get beyond. We hope that voice you hear begging you not to leave your son again is the voice you are listening to. Whatever happens before you get to be back with your family, we hope you take full advantage of the education and other programs that are offered. You have a full life ahead of you. Prepare for it so that you can be the best mother possible.

I hear my son all the time in my dreams. I always hear him saying, "Mommy, please don't leave me any longer."

The Violence Got To My Head

I think my surroundings and the people I hang out with cause me to be the teen I am right now. Most of my decisions was influenced by peers, at least until I started making decisions on my own, because the violence got to my head and that's when I went completely egotistical.

I joined a gang about November, and once I really accepted that I was in a gang nobody could tell me nothing. Most of all my impacts came from most of the young black men and my family, that was dying faster then the Iraqis at war.

Then it was thug movies I saw that encouraged me that the bad life was the better life.

But getting caught and sent to Juvenile has changed me completely. It's not the whole fact that I was ready to grow up and pursue the better live. I don't regret gettin' caught for my crime, because if I didn't I would have did something far worser that probably would have got me killed.

I feel people's attitudes rely on the decisions they make in life and the consequences that come with it.

-Wesley, Alameda

From The Beat: There's a confidence and wisdom in the way you right that makes us truly believe you will make the changes you describe. Maybe it's because of the clear-eyed way you explain how you first fell for the old temptations. But tell us this – the thug movies are still there, the death on Oakland's street is still there, and if there's drama at home, you probably can't control that. So the changes won't come from outside, they'll have to come from inside you. What are the changes happening inside you?

Mi Vida Cambió

Mi vida cambió cuando entre a la juvenile. Antes andaba en la calle bien tranquilo sin ningún problema con nadie. Ahora que estoy aquí no puedo salir por causa a que no me porto bien y porque no tengo a nadie quien me recoja. Por eso no he podido salir. Ahora voy a estar aquí hasta my birthday que es el año que viene y eso es mucho tiempo.

Estoy desesperado y quiero salir de aquí. Quiero salir para trabajar, buscar una sexygirl y hacerla mi novia. Ya no quiero tener más problema mas yudar a mis padres y hermanos. Quiero comunicarme más tiempo con ellos por teléfono para decirles lo mucho que los quiero. Para eso, quiero salir de aquí y portarme bien.

From The Beat: Buenos planes! Siempre vas a terminar en el mismo lugar y en la misma situación a menos que dejes de hacer las cosas que estas haciendo. Te estamos diciendo esto de experiencia y otros que hemos visto. Tus palabras se escuchan sinceras, esperamos que lleguen a realizarse tus deseos y llegues a buscar a esa persona que quieres para que te ayude a salirte de las negatividades en la que te encuentras.

My Life Changed

My life changed when I came to juvenile hall. Before, I used to be on the streets without any problem with anybody. Now that I am here, I can't get out due to my bad behavior and also because I don't have anyone to pick me up. Now I'm going to stay here for my birthday which is next year and that's in a long time.

I am desperate and I want to get out of here. I want to get out to work, look for a sexy girl and make her my girlfriend. I don't want to have more problems.

I want to help my parents, and brothers. I'll like to have a better communication with them by phone to tell them how much I love them. That's why I want to get out and do well.

-Rudy, Alameda

From The Beat: Good plans! You have to find a way to behave better or else you will always end up in the same situation and place you find yourself in. And we are saying this from experience that we have lived and others seen. Your words sound honest and we hope you make those dreams a reality and find a special person that can help you stay from all the negativity that you are.

Mi Vida Es Un Desmadre

Todo este año fueron puras mensadas que me han pasado. Cosas como corriendome de la placa, y la gente hablando desmadre. A mí me vale.

Ahora estoy haciendo tiempo por una pendejada. Pronto saldre y me miraran más arriba alumbrando el suelo.

From The Beat: Ten cuidado y te entierran a ti primero. Deja de jugar con fuego porque te puedes quemar. Sino paras ese dichoso desmadre, en el desmadres vas a terminar.

My Life Is A Mess

This year a lot of mess happened to me. Things like running away from the police, and a lot of shhh talking. I don't care though.

Now I'm doing time for a stupid thing. I'll get out soon and they will see me illuminating the ground from above the sky.

-New me, Alameda

From The Beat: Sorry we had to cut the last sentence. It was not appropriate. But be careful with what you say. It can turn around to you. If you don't stop that messy life, you will end up messed up.

Malos Momentos

Yo tengo un amigo que es buena onda y está pasando por algo bien duro que yo. No sé como se sienta, pero presiento que se siente muy mal.

Le aconsejo que se porte para que se resuelva su problema y esté feliz como antes para que pueda hacer lo mismo que uno hace cuando está feliz. Ojalá que se le resuelva su problema.

From The Beat: Deberías de preguntarle como se siente y buscar la forma de animarlo. Es así como se conocen los amigos. ¿También te estas preocupando por ti y tu situación? ¿Si si, cómo?

Bad Moments

I have a friend who is nice and is going through a hard period of time. I don't know how he might feel, but I am having a feeling that he feels bad.

I advice him to behave to solve his problem and be happy like before, so he can do what a happy person do when being happy. I hope he resolve his problem.

-Rudy, Alameda

From The Beat: You ask him how he feels and find hope for him to animate him. That's what a friend is. In the other hands, are you worrying for your own self and situation? If so, how?

Es Bien Dificil

Si mi padre o mi madre me dijeran que deje a mi novia y tubiera un hijo, le dijera que en eso no se tienen que meter ellos. Les dijera que ellos no pararon antes de tenerme a mí.

Una vez mi mama no le caía bien a mi novia. Al pasar el tiempo, ella se dió cuenta que ella me quería mucho. Eso le gusto porque se dio cuenta que me sentia bien al lado de ella.

Con el tiempo todo salía bien hasta ahora que me encuentro aquí. Las cosas cambiaron un poco porque me siento encerrado.

Cuando salga todo va a volver a ser como antes. Espero que todo salga bien.

From The Beat: Esperamos que todo vuelva a como antes. ¿Crees que esta experiencia te ayude a darte cuenta de lo que estabas haciendo está malo? Tienes a tus padres quienes te apoyan y a una nena que te espera, esperamos y no los hagas esperar mucho.

It's Very Hard

If my parents ask me to dump my girlfriend or to have a babe, I would tell them not to intervene with my relationship. I would ask him why didn't they stop before they had me.

One time my mom didn't like my girl, but when period of time passed by, she realized she love me so much. She liked that because she found out I would spend a great time by her side.

After a while, everything was fine until I came here. Things changed a little because I'm here.

When I get out, everything will be like before. I hope everything goes well.

-Milton, Alameda

From The Beat: We hope everything turn back to before. Do you this experience can help you realize what areas of your life you are messing you? You have your parents who support you in everything, and a young lady who waits for you. e hope you don't make them wait too long.

It's Hard Being A "G"

The streets take lives and they won't give them back
That's when youngstas get to shootin' and start sellin'
crack

Money blinds people, green is all they see
That's why I keep tellin' people it's hard being a G
Some drop out of school and they never return
Instead they post up on the block, roll some grapes, and
they burn
We commit a bunch of crimes, land in jail with dreams
of being free
That's why I keep telling people its hard being me...
..cause I'm a G!

-Gumby

From The Beat: You are also a great poet and writer, telling The Beat how it is on the streets.

Who Are You Most Afraid To Lose? And Why?

The person I am most afraid to lose in my life is my mom because she's the one that gave birth to me. My mom loves me very much and I love her very much. She would do anything for me, no matter what happens to me. Even if I'm wrong, she still has my back, regardless of what anyone has to say. If I lose my mama, I would go insane.

To keep it solid, I wouldn't know how to act. I'd lose my mind and I wouldn't talk to anybody for a very long time. I would be like Adam Sandler off "Reign Over Me".

-Lil' Beanthers

From The Beat: Your mom sounds like a great lady. We hope you have her in your life for a long time to come!

Afraid To Lose My Family

What's up Beat. This your homeboy Chikillo. Well the persons I don't wanna lose is my mom, sister, dad and my girl. Well the reason I don't want to lose my mom and dad because there's no other persons that could take their place. Because I love my mom and dad they're the most important people. I love them.

Plus, I don't want to lose my sister, because she the only sister I got and I love her a lot, because I been with her since I was little.

But yeah, that's my reason why I love my family. And the reason I don't wanna lose my girl (friend) is because that's the girl I love and I been with her like for 5 years and that's why I don't want to lose my girl because I love her a lot. Well I'm out. Alratoz beat.

-Juan The Chikillo

From The Beat: Well if you love your parents and your sister like you say you do, then why are you choosing to lead your life like this? Don't you know that life in gangs is gonna guarantee you a couple things. And that's incarceration, stripped from you freedom and privileges, and family, or death. So if you love them then change your ways so they won't have to suffer.

Haters

Haters is when people don't like what you got or getting. Haters is people that don't like you because you got something good going on with you.

Like people want to slap you
because they get kicked out of class
and the other person don't.

But if they always try to get the last word
they're going to get kicked out.

-Baby Dolger

From The Beat: Haters are people who hate? Why do you think people hate so much? Instead of hating why can't they congratulate? Why is there so much envy in the street? Did you ever hate on anyone?

Who Are You?

Who am I?

Man, I'm Lil Rio.

A wise ninja that do what I do,
stay positive, but always in the wrong of something.
I get out in about a month.

-Rio

From The Beat: We hope that you will use your wisdom and your positive attitude to keep from coming back to the Hall. How do you plan to stay out of trouble? Even if you've had bad luck in the past, maybe you can change things up this time.

My Family

I'm afraid to lose my family because they are really important to me. I love them. I wish I was home before Christmas so that I can be with them opening up presents. And my two little sister they are the best in my life. I love it when they say they love me.

The other reason why I love my two little sisters is because they little and very smart and that they always stay safe and like to go to school.

My older sister is the one I love too, even though we argue and fight, I will always love her.

Alright that's about it.

-Lil' Alex

From The Beat: Brothers and sisters are always going to have their differences and argue. But the important thing that you have to remember is that y'all love each other no matter on what kind of things y'all don't agree on. We hope that you learn something valuable from this experience and never have to see you come back here.

What Keeps Me Up At Night

The thing that keeps me up at night is when I think of this one time I spent the night in an abandon house. It was about five months ago. Me and my friends and my girlfriend spent the night in a abandon house. We even saw a man, about two times, that scared the shhh out of us. We seen blood and the wall cracking and heard a lot of screaming.

I'll continue this next week.

Peace Beat, keep it real.

-Desmond

From The Beat: What kind of abandoned house were you in? That's scary, seeing blood, and a guy y'all don't know. And y'all still slept over? Can't wait to read more!

I'm Afriad To Lose My Granny

Who am I afraid to lose? Well, that is a good question. The person I am afraid to lose is my granny. She is the positive part of me. She is my other half, the loving, emotional part of me.

I am a granny's boy. I love her the most of all my family. If I ever lose her, I would probably go crazy. From the day I was born, she has been there. Whenever I was sick, I could count on her to be there. When I wanted the new Game Boy Color, she made sure she got it for me. I don't kno, I love my granny so much. Her name is Nora. Now she is very sick and I can't wait to be with her for the last of her days. But I don't know what I would do if I lost her.

-Ronald

From The Beat: Even though it is heartbreaking, each of us has to prepare for the passing of those who have loved us and raised us. Even though grief washes over us like a wave when someone passes, amazingly, we emerge from this wave and continue to breathe and live. This is part of being human, just like loving is part of being human. So the point is: you can do it. You will have the opportunity to continue your granny's legacy of love in your own family life. To honor her always.

Loss Of A Role Model

Well, tell you the truth, I did have a role model, yes. He did get locked up, but first let me explain it to you: he was a big dope dealer from my hood. You know, he had it all, money, drugs, and cars. Everything you could think about.

Also, every time he show up in the hood, every one of us loved him, even the people who hated him loved him too. I just admired him so much that I wanted to be like him, you know, because that's everybody's fantasy: having it all. Until one day around 5:00 a-m, the Feds came to get him because he was doing it so big that he put attention out there. So the Feds started to investigate. So, like I was saying, they got him and took him to jail, so he lost everything. The judge trying to give him forty, too. I realize that everything happen for a reason and like my mom said, this dope game is only a matter of time.

-Carlos

From The Beat: Your mom is 100% right. If you read the pages of The Beat Without, at the back of this magazine, you will read words of wisdom from many people who have gotten caught up in the drug game and the quest for more, more, more. Your role model is a classic example. A lot of people admired him and some of them probably got financial benefits from his dealing and lifestyle. But it was a house of cards. Eventually the police or violent enemies catch up, and it's all over.

My Mom And Sister

I am mostly afraid to lose my mom and sister because they show me the most love in my family. My sister she is the most important to me because she the youngest. She cries every time she hears my name come up. My mom is always there for me when I came to this Juvenile Hall and they called her she told me to stay calm and don't loose.

-A Young Son

From The Beat: Your mom wants you to stay strong and don't lose your cool. You already put yourself in a hole and the best thing for you to do is to try to climb out of it. Don't dig a deeper hole.

Plenty Of Times

I remember plenty of times when my momma told me she didn't want me to be with the people I hang with on a daily basis. She told I was with the wrong crowd because I would come in the house at 1,2,3,4 in the morning or just didn't come in the house at all, because I was always gone and never called my family. Or I'd come in the house hella drunk and high and go to my room and go straight to sleep.

I remember my mama threatened to call the police but I told her to go ahead but she didn't. And I still mess with the people she told me not to. But in a way look at where I'm at now. I had a lot to think about my friends, my life and I still don't know what I want to do.

-Charrantae

From The Beat: You don't have to know what you want to do, but one thing you should know is whether you like coming to jail, and putting on the next man's draws. Do you like the county food you're eating? Do you like being locked up and have somebody tell what to do and when to do it? Ask yourself those questions. And then the rest of your answers will come a lot easier.

My Mom

The person I'm afraid to lose is my mom, because she is the only person I have. And my family, but I would be mad and sad if I lost her - my mom.

-Lil' Twone

From The Beat: Sounds like your mom is a very special woman in your life. You shouldn't waste your time being in the halls. You should be out spending time with your mom and family.

Loss Of A Role Model

When someone gets locked up that I look up to, it don't change the way I think about them, it motivates me to be better than them. When they get locked up, I do be mad 'cause it's like that person was my motivator. Everybody I look up to motivates me to get the things that I want. The people I look up to are older people. I used to do whatever they did when they was younger. I used to want to stay out later at night, I used to want to do everything my role models did.

-Lil' Rob

From The Beat: Since you've lost some role models, is it harder for you to stay motivated? Do you have any new role models? Do you see yourself as a role model?

I Still Respect Him

My cousin Ricky was my role model...and honestly still is. He just got locked up for a drug case and for armed robbery. I can't think less of him because I got charged and am in here. I still respect him because he still tries to keep me on the right track.

-Junebug

From The Beat: He sounds like a good person! Hopefully, you can both help each other stay positive and stay on track. He'll need your support, too, while he's facing some serious time.

I....

I love my family

I care for them

Sometimes they treat me wrong

My love is strong

I fight and cry

It feel like a ballet going through me

I might die

It feels like my soul is being lifted out of me

But I keep my head up

I show them how tough

I am

I pray and meditate

It helps

No need to point out

Dry like a snout

Our hour about

-Tsheyze

From The beat: We can understand how you feel. Love is pain, or sometimes just being in the love business you take a gamble. You either win or sometimes you lose and get hurt. But you have to stay strong, and not give up.

Life Is Not A Sprint It's A Marathon

I sit in my room sometimes an ask God why am I addicted to cash. Why did I steal? Why did I go for quick money instead of the legal cash? Why didn't I get a job at McDonalds and stack my cash? Why did surroundings make me grow up fast?

I was doing all this so I could stunt, shine, whatever you call it. Now I got to slow down so I can win this race. 'Cause life not a sprint it's a marathon, and if you keep running in the fast lane you ain't gon' be able to finish your life race.

-J-Lou

From The Beat: You're absolutely right. We're glad to hear that you have realized that you were moving too fast. Sometimes we get really caught up in the environment and we grow up too fast and we keep hitting the gas but never try to hit the breaks. And before you know it you're going 100mph into a brick wall. Boom! Then it's a wrap. Take it easy, and set your own pace, so you could finish your race, without running outta breath.

Not My Mom

I'm afraid to lose my mom because without her I would not know what to do because everyday I get up and try to call her name and she don't answer. I will lose my mind. Because my mom been there for me my whole life and plus I'm the baby of the family and I love her to death. So that's why I'm afraid to lose my mom. And plus if I lose mom I would not go to the funeral because that will really freak me out more seeing my mom in a casket. I won't know what to do.

-D Jones

From The Beat: What you should do right now is not get into anymore trouble, because you're mom is afraid to lose you right now. She doesn't want to see you in the halls or in the streets doing bad. She wants to see you doing positive things for yourself that's gonna help you be successful in life.

Cheated!

Well for me I would feel
Mad and angry about it
Because I would wanna be
With her forever and ever
For me if I was physically abused
I would call the authority to come
So they could come save me to help
Get me out of physically abused

-Anonymous

From The Beat: Have you ever cheated on someone? And why would you put up with physical abuse? That's not somebody you would want to be with.

Listen Up!

My name is Amber and this is like my fourth time in Juvenile Hall for the same thing, not going to school. Which I learned this time because before I would only serve a weekend but this time I had to serve almost 3 weekends in here so this time I learned my lesson. Because it's been to many times I've been in here and it's kinds childish now and I think I should think about my consequences before my actions. And have wisdom.

But I think that this last time of me being here gave me motivation to be good and change the directions that I make. It really got me closer relationship with God that I already had and me being in here really brought me happiness and joy to know.

After I get out I'm gonna make my life better and the life I want to live, and have consideration for my family and friends, and everyone surrounding me.

-Amber

From The Beat: Sometimes it takes us a little more than a weekend in jail to realize that we've been messing up. Stop right here before you spend any more time in jail. It's good that you recognize your mistake and now you plan to fix it.

My Mother And Brother

To me, at this point and time, the persons I am afraid to lose most will be my mother and brother. The reason I say that is because they are the most caring and loving people who care a lot about me and my future. I know if I had a problem they would make sure I handled it in the most appropriate way, and plus they couldn't be replaced by any other people if I lost them.

-Nell

From The Beat: At this point in time, you need to stop, and reflect on what you're doing in life. Ask yourself if you want to keep going down this path of incarceration. Your parents don't want to see you behind bars.

Mom On My Mind

I am afraid to lose my mom because she was here to support me. And if I lose her I'm gonna go crazy because she always come to see me in jail and she tried to buy me everything I need.

I'll go crazy because I already lost my sister, she was murdered, and that's why I'll go crazy.

Or if I lose one of my family members I'll go crazy. And if I lose my girl I'll go crazy.

I was down on my luck when I came here 'cause I got locked up and that's why my luck went down.

-Ernesto

From The Beat: We're sorry to hear about your sister. We know you now realize that coming to jail ain't the business. You should be spending time with your lady, your mom and family. This is ain't the place and don't make it your life. We're pulling for you Ernesto!

What To Do?

Backed up in the corner. Don't know what to say, no explanation to say so in this matter. How do I go about this? They keep saying my friend already talked to them and said everything. They said he said I done it. But I didn't do shhh. Tell you the truth I don't know what they talking bout. Maybe they talking bout that one night we robbed that dude. Should I tell them that?

Naw, I can't, that's snitching. So I'm gonna go out wit' a bang. At the same time they said they know my whole family and dude told on all of us and said we robbed that dude. I ain't do shhh. He did it! But I ain't gone say shhh to these crackers and this uppity ninja. So I told them f you and have a nice day, I wanna see my lawyer. The End.

-Boe

From The Beat: You don't have to say anything to anybody. You have your rights. Do you like/trust your lawyer? What is your lawyer's advice? What does your family think? Stay up, remember The Beat is here to listen.

A Deal With God

The deal I made with God. I made a deal with God to see if he will take it. And the only way I will find out is if he accepted my deal, is if my prayers got answered. I gave God a list and of what I needed to be done also I gave him a list of what I'll do.

-Marcus

From The Beat: So what do you hope to get out of this deal with God? What kind of answers are you looking for? What are you willing to do? And what happens if you don't "get what you want." Does that mean you give up on your faith, yourself?

My One And Only Bro

Well, I would not really want to write about these kind of things because I don't want to talk about them.

Who am I'm afraid to lose it would have to be my bro because we are so close. Everything I did in my life my lil' bro been there right by my side. I love him so much I mean I would die for that lil' ninja.

Man what can I say I just know he got my back and I got his. Me and my bro been close since we were little. I don't know what to say. I don't know what I would do without him. He keeps me going through the day. I thank God for that.

-Big bro

From The Beat: You should be on the outs taking care of your brother. Do you think you're being a good brother by getting locked up? You need to set an example for your brother so he won't make the same mistakes you did? You don't want your brother getting locked up, now do you?

Tough One

Tough one yeah, I been through a lot and it just like it's never gonna end. I'm 17, finna be 18 and I'm going to the Y, so I gotta just concentrate and focus on my life.

And I got to change 'cause it just seems like there's no way out. I'm gonna stick to my Bible and God, and he will help me get through this.

-Lil' David

From The Beat: Sounds like you're really going through a tough one. But you seem to be focus. Don't lose site of your goals and dreams, and concentrate on your life. This is your opportunity to decide what you want to do. You're not gonna be trapped in there forever.

My Girl And My Family

My name is Z. I am most afraid of losing my girlfriend. I love her to death and would be extremely upset to see anything happen to her. We've been together for almost nine months. She would do anything for me and always has my back.

Also my grandmother I would be afraid to loose. She cooks really good food and is always there.

My father is also very important to me, he gives me a lot of money.

-Z

From The Beat: Those are all very important people in your life. We don't see why you decided to get into trouble. You should be out with your girl, you should be eating your grandma's food, and you should be getting money from your dad. Why are you here?

Word Play

Young Mari I write 500 words per minute
I got dread locks and I like to wear Eddie Bauer
My word vocabulary go higher then them towers
God, my right hand man and I got the power
He said love everybody but I still don't like cowards
I just started writing and I'm the best all ready
I'm saucier than a big bowl of spaghetti
You boys ain't ready
For the talent I got
Just found out I had it believe me or not
Writing skills is something that I got
People say I'm tight see
I'm already blazing just need somebody to light me
Did you forget I come from Oakland where the youngstas
get hyphy.

-Young Mari

From The Beat: Nice word play Young Mari. Your vocabulary is pretty good. You should challenge yourself and try to keep improving your talent, and go to college too!

Down On Your Luck

Well today I was really down on my luck. Lately, I had been wanting someone to come and talk to me. Well so happened my probation officer came and told me that I have two more charges in another county, San Mateo. I already knew I had a long journey ahead of me to deal with in this country, but more charges WOW! That's an even longer journey. It was kind of frustrating because they told me my prints didn't come back, but now they did. So now I'm going to go through a long process of some B-S.

-Nee Nee

From The Beat: No matter how hard your situation may get remember it's up to you to make matters worse or make it a little better. You're gonna have to go through a process you might not like but you have to suck it up and stick through it. You're in for quite a journey so make it how you want to make it. It could be a good journey or a bad one?

Who Are You Most Afraid To Lose? And Why?

My mom. Why, because she did a lot for me and my family.

-Baby Dolger

From The Beat: Your mom is a very important person. We bet she is a strong woman. Does she come see you? You should be with her right now instead of chilling with the staff in the hall.

Who Am I?

I'm a seventeen years old dancer who is very outgoing and likes to laugh a lot. Hate being locked down and love to chill with my big homies and talk on the phone. I hate being on this punk ass probation shhh 'cause it's ruining my whole lil' swagga.

I like to be out in San Francisco. That's my city. I just enjoy riding high and being in the air for those who know what I'm talking bout LOL.

Yeah if you wanna know my name they call me Von Dutch aka Glamma chick but I'm gone for now.

-Yadida

From The Beat: If you hate being locked down so much than why do you get into trouble? Stay out of trouble and you won't have to worry about coming back here. You like dancing, why don't you dance in competitions. Use some of your hobbies to stay busy so you can stay free from holes like this.

Refuse to be Abused

I refuse to be abuse. So the advice I will give to people who's being abused, don't take that abuse no more. Run from the situation. Step up and don't allow that abuse no more cause if you don't it gon' continue...

-Keith

From The Beat: Sometimes you can't run away from abuse because it will follow you. You can't always run away from your problems because they will run with you. You have to face it, and get help. It's hard being in that position but there are people always willing to help, like family, friends, and if you don't have none of that, then you can call the hotlines.

Keep Your Heads High

What's good Beat it's your homie from Livermore, just chilling waiting for camp Sweeney to pick me up. I just want to say to all the homeboys locked up to keep your head up high and don't be stressing about your case you'll be out soon.

Remember this we can't fall because we losing hella homies in the game. So pimp your program and make it home.

-Looney

From The Beat: What exactly do you mean pimp the program? You mean pimp the system? Maybe you should tell the homies to learn everything that they can that'll help them out in life in the program. And tell them to stay out and not come back to other facilities.

A Tough One With My Mom

My mother wanted me to stop seeing this one girl because of her age. She really couldn't be mad because I would have probably felt the same way if I was her.

The women wasn't treating me a certain way, she was just many years older than me, & it didn't hurt me because I didn't stop talking to her until we moved from the area.

I remember Saturday morning when I would wake up ready to get dumb ass on because that's when the parties start crackin'. It's always a party on Saturday.

-Carl

From The Beat: Why did you stop talking to the girl? Was it because of your mom? Or she wasn't the one for you?

Never For Long

Being down on your luck is never for long
A state of pain and sorrow ain't about bad luck
Life is what you make it, don't matter ya luck

You're just in a bad place you may hate
But if you're down you won't be down for long

So forget about the wrong

And keep the strength to move on!

I may be sad because I can't wait

I may be mad because I am in this place

I may be confused about my current state

But I'll always be happy that I am alive and great!

-Sexy And Sophisticated

From The Beat: Being down on your luck just means that there are some obstacles standing in your way that you need to get through. Nobody ever said life was gonna be easy. We have to have strength to wake up every morning, and be prepared for anything that life has to throw at us!

Losing My Family

I am also afraid to lose my family because once every body you so call, yo' friend and family turn the back on you. Yo' real family is the only people you got to depend on. But I am hella scared to lose my family because even though I do them dirty they always been there for me and they aint never stopped loving me because of the things I do. But even though I make the wrong choices they will always be by my side.

-Cherry

From The Beat: That's because your family wants to see you do good. But you can't expect to do your family shady your whole life and still expect them to have your back. They're doing it right now because they realize that you're young and we all make mistakes. But you can't keep burning them. You gotta show them love back for putting up with yo' shhh. Sooner or later you're gonna have to start making better choices. Mature up!

Again

So I'm back in jail again. For like the second time. It feels like I just got out. Oh yeah I did on 10/31/07 wow that was fast, but I know that next time I wont get caught what's funny is that my home girls is in here with me. I guess God did not want us to be out on the street right now.

-Bubbles

From The Beat: Maybe God doesn't want y'all in the street getting into any trouble. We don't know, but you have to start looking at some of the things you're doing that get you locked up. Do you like coming here? Do you like the food? Do you like having staff telling you what to do and when to do it? If you do then maybe this is the place for you. If you don't then, this ain't the place for you. Wake up!

Afraid To Lose My Boyfriend

The person that I'm afraid of losing is my boyfriend Devont because he's my heart. He's my everything. He's the person I can run to with my troubles(problems) or anything. He's the person that keeps me motivated while I'm in jail.

He's the person who I can depend on to help take care of our unborn child. But if I ever lose him I'm not sure what I would do because I love him so much it's hard to see myself without my other half. Yeah I'm only fifteen and people say that I'm too young to love anybody but my family. But that's not true. I have that young love for my baby daddy Davonta.

-Precious

From The Beat: Well, we wish you the best for you and your boyfriend. We hope that you have the strength to stop doing what you were doing that's getting you locked up so you can spend time with your family and boyfriend.

Why Me, Out Of All People

I'm stressed out

I'm just wanting to get out

I'm hoping my lil' sister don't follow my footsteps

If she do she gone be in here stressing too!

I consider myself as a fool

A fool that don't know what to do

Confused

A lost soul that's trapped in a body

That has me making all these wrong decisions

I'm having visions

Of one day reaching my goal

But how can I reach my goal

If I don't know which way to go

Money.... Ain't it funny

How you could get trapped just like that

It's a fact

I'm a beautiful girl who graduated at sixteen

Don't even know if she still wants to be a human being

And it's a shame it's lame I dropped out of college

For what to end up in a cell that feels like hell

I'm tired of being the person who I'm really not

I'm tired of making someone else happy what about me?

What about my goals? I can't give up!

I want to be happy

Just like the Cosby family

But it ain't happening at least not for me

'Cause of me

But watch I'm go back to school 'cause I have to be

A role model for my sis'

So she won't never have to be confused

She gone know what to do because I'm gonna be there

I'm slowly killing myself

I got to stay strong

So as long as I'm living

I'm gonna be that special role model for my sister

I love her too much for her to down the ladder

I want her to go up the ladder

And she ain't gon' fall like I'm falling

I won't let her

Man I got to change

Lord please show me the right way

And don't lead me into temptation

But you already know I always have to learn my lesson

Because I don't never want to listen

Forgive me just don't let me do too much

Always your daughter.

-Christina

From The Beat: Why you? Maybe it's your destiny. You have to fulfill and be a role model for your sister. Now you can tell your sister to not go the route you took. If she falls, be there for her so you can pick her up. And if she sees you falling, she better help you up also.

I Am Myself

I am myself and when I think about doing something I do it. It might make me happy or it might make me sad. I lived in the streets and I don't want to see how it feels.

My grandma made me who I am today. I don't play video games, but my life is a video game, going through the levels, which are the struggles, and it can be game over any day. So therefore I live my day like it was my last. I respect others as how they respect me.

-Lil' Dave

From The Beat: That videogame metaphor is intense - especially because when a person plays a videogame, they don't really have freedom. They can only do what the machine is programmed to do. Being caught in a videogame is a lot like being caught in a system. How are you going to get out of this game, and make it a real "Game Over"?

Chris

I really care about my ninja Chris but all the homies call him Apeo and they call me lady Apeo. I really care about him because we always been together and we are always there for each other. But at the same time I am hella scared to lose him because I know the things that he be doing get him locked up.

And I am scared I will never see him again but no matter what I will always be his ride or die top notch glamour chick. But I am just hella scared to lose him because he is my support system and I can depend on him. I know that no matter what I do he will always be here helping me succeed in what I believe in. He will always be my ninja no matter what.

-Cherry

From The Beat: Your friend sounds like he has a good heart but he makes bad decisions. What can you do to help him out? We don't want to see you writing an RIP piece about your boy. Why does he like putting his life and freedom in jeopardy? Are you his support system?

Torn

I'm most afraid of losing my boyfriend as well as my family. I feel like I may lose my family or my boyfriend over my family. I love them both with all my heart. But my mom can't see past my boyfriend's color. I'm hurting my mom by running away to be with my boyfriend because I love him.

But if stay with my family I know he'll still be there for me but my boyfriend doesn't want me to hurt my family by being with him. Even though he loves me we're going to get married, and I hope I can get my mom to see I'm happy no matter what color he is.

Hopefully our kids will bring us all together as a family, and I won't lose either of them. (I miss my boyfriend, I miss my family, I miss my freedom. I miss being home with my mom to comfort me. I can't stand being in here. It's so hard. I turned 18 on Dec.29, and I was still in here. I lost a lot of my childhood that I can never get back. But I'm determined to do better.

-Angel

From The Beat: You need to stop running away. You can still be with your boyfriend and be with your family. Running away only makes things worse not only on yourself but for everybody else to. You can't run away from your problems 'cause they are gonna be right there running right behind you. You need to get out of jail and get your priorities straight. We can understand you want to be with your man, but jeez, you got other things to think about especially if you're gonna be having kids. Like education, getting a job, getting off probation etc. Be a little more responsible.

I Am A Lady

I am a lady that's been through obstacles in my life that's making me stronger everyday.

I am a lady that is more than willing to take on the responsibilities of my everyday life.

I am a young lady that doesn't have any discipline but choose to listen because it will affect me and my unborn child.

I am a lady that I choose to be in the future is a lady of wisdom.

New year's resolution:

Stay on my P's & Q's,

stop smoking,

take care of my responsibility, do me.

-Ladi Lee

From The Beat: Those are all like some realistic New Year's Resolution. We're glad to hear you sound more mature. We're glad to hear you accept responsibilities for your actions. We hope that you continue to grow and get over these obstacles. Soon you will be free and you can get all your goals accomplished.

Dedicated To My Family

I'm sitting here alone Christmas is almost here

I wish I was home to celebrate the new year

I'm sitting here in fear

With nothing else to do my mistakes will never disappear But I can start a new a kinds of stuff I wish I never did Taking it back would be a blessing

I missed out on being a kid

Instead I'm in here stressing I have nothing to hide

I'm done with this poem instead I'll keep the rest inside

And just hope I go home.

-Angel

From The Beat: You need to dedicate yourself to trying to stay out of jail. You made the mistakes you've made already. Now you must face the consequences and do your time. Then when you get out you can change whatever you were doing that got you in trouble in the first place. This is your life. Use this time to get your life right!

Can't Lose My Baby

I've been with him almost a year in a half and he still my baby from then to now! That's my baby we have each other back from top to bottom! I would go crazy to lose my one and only love! He means the world to me! It's bad enough I had lost one of my true loves he had got shot in the head by a gauge! Don't nobody know how it feel to loose one of your love!

I can't lose another I will go crazy again. And to know that I have another love one that I would want to be with forever! And I know he wanna be with me forever! If I found out I lost him I would go crazy and I...mean crazy...

How I know this truthful young man loved me? I know because every time I feel down my baby always made me feel like a sunflower. He treat me well and he make sure I eat right plus he buy me things. He is a good young man he got a job to help us both out. And for me to lose him yes I said yes I would go crazy.

- Cakes

From The Beat: Sounds like you got yourself a good dude. Stop wasting your time being locked up. What are you waiting for? Get free, do your probation and go be with your boyfriend. And by the way you're not the only one that has lost loved ones. People are dying everyday. Every time somebody dies, that's someone son/daughter, someone's nephew, somebody's cousin, brother, role model, etc. Whatever you name it. We all lose loved ones out here.

Daddy's Lil' Girl

Daddy's lil' girl they called me, plus my family say I act just like my daddy. I use to wake up in the mornings and head straight to my daddy room. We joked and laughed, but when the sport games came on it was time for me to get out.

See my daddy didn't do anything, but stay in his room a lot and drink coffee. When it was time for me to complain about what my mother did to me, he acted like he was quiet doing the game.

And when my daddy cut the grass early in the morning, he would come to the door every morning to check on his grass. He even yelled out the door for people to get off his lawn. But see when my daddy got sick and the doctors had to let him go, I cried like a baby. Even in front of my baby boy, my daddy held my hand and then let it go.

So one night when my mom sister and I fell a sleep in the hospital room I told my daddy that I would see him again, but I never said good bye, while he died 3:00 that morning when we went sleep.

-Laurice

From The Beat: We're sorry to hear about your daddy. We hope that you have the strength and courage to push forward for your dad. Keep his memory alive and succeed so you can make him proud.

You Was There

You was there when times got rough
 You was there to keep me warm during the rainy days
 You was there to comfort me when you heard about my
 child's death
 You was there through thick and thin on any
 circumstances
 You was there with me under the moonlight and shared
 secrets we never shared with others
 You was the one who said that I was worth more than
 rubies, gold, and diamonds
 You always told me you never wanted a broken
 relationship and that you hope this isn't lust.
 Well let me tell you something Davon
 This isn't lust this is love.

-Precious

From The Beat: Sounds like this person really cares about you, and you care for him. Is that person waiting for you to get out? What can you do to show your appreciation for that person that has been so loyal to you?

Waiting To Get Out

Sitting here thinking of when I'm going to get out and have more time to be with my family. I miss them so much. I been in here for a month now and the time I'm in here I could have been spending with my family.

My mom really needs me right now because I always take care of her. She has dialysis every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

-Kevin

From The Beat: You right man, you're wasting your time being locked up. You need to stop making poor decisions. Shape up so you can be with your family and help take care of your mom.

I Been Abused

I've been in this situation before I know how it feels to be abused mentally and physically. It's not a feeling that most people would like.

What I did was run. At the time there was about 9 or 10 I could remember my God-brothers would take me to abandon house across the street from theirs. They would beat me up, tie up, put guns to my head and pull the trigger but the gun wasn't loaded.

The advice I can give people that are in that situation just pray and hope that things can get better. Keep yo' trust in God and pray for better days.

-Rick The Ruler

From The Beat: Damn that's horrible man. Did you go to the authorities? Did you try to get help? Now that you are older, have you thought about how that might have affected you, been connected to mistakes you made later? Do you have people you can talk to about this now?

Tired of Being in Here

What good Beat? Me I'm just tired of being here 'cause I want to go home 'cause people in here is fake as hell. But all I have to do is not listen to them, and I know I can do it 'cause I am level three.

I am going to make it in here but that does not mean I'm not going to get mad, 'cause I always do it, and they just let me take my anger out on them. But Beat I don't not know when I am getting out of here, and I may have to go to a group home.

-Baby Gurl

From The Beat: Just keep your strength up a little longer and focus on that light at the end of the tunnel. This is the final stretch—and we know you can do it!

Saturday Morning to Saturday Night

I remember Saturday mornings' waking up cleaning the house. Then getting dressed and was gone for the rest of the day. Ain't no telling where I would end up on a Saturday night.

-Keith

From The Beat: Sounds way better than waking up in Juvenile Hall. Ain't no telling where you'd end up on a Saturday Night, but we can tell that you landed here. Why waste yo' time?

My Loved Ones That Died

I miss Ant, and when he used to be on block and coming through my spot. That's my boy, and he still here 'cause he live and he my blood. But it's more of my love ones that died. They still here in my heart, but I just miss seeing them shining an' getting dough.

They gon' watch over me as I be doing my thang. But I miss them.

-Lil' T

From The Beat: If you believe they are watching you, than give them something to watch and be proud of. Be successful in life, live on and thrive in the names of your fallen loved ones.

Down On My Luck Right Now

I am down on my luck because I got released to a group home on Friday the fourth, and I ran through the front door, while my man and patna were waiting on me, I jumped in and from that day a lot of stuff went down.

The next night I was at the store with my mother and my boyfriend, and then out of nowhere the police came and arrested me.

They said nobody has ever run like that before. I can't even call my loved ones; I miss my baby girl and her daddy "the king"

-The King's Wife

From The Beat: Your beautiful little girl does not need her life choices cut down by growing up on the run with an on the run mama. We know you know this already, but you will have other temptations to run next time you get sent to a group home, and you need to be the wise WOMAN we know you are, so that you can do your time quietly and quickly, learn whatever you can from the placement (including whatever information they have on GED's/job placement, etc), and then return to your baby girl as a young adult, ready to offer your child a life that is on the record and legit.

My Mom: She is Everything To Me

Who I'm most afraid to lose? I am most afraid to lose my mom because she is like my best friend. She is everything to me, and without my mom I won't make it in this world.

That's why I have to step my game up and do my time so I could be there with my mom to help her put less stress on herself, see, 'cause right now she sick, and by me being in here it's stressin' her out. I got to be there for her. She needs me right now, and I'm sitting here acting out, trying to play suicidal and crazy.

I'm now realizing that I'm too old to be acting the way I'm acting, and people try to tell me that I need to help myself so I could go home to my mom, and I didn't want to listen. But now I'm trying to do good, because I have to get somewhere, you know? But now I am trying to be there for my mom, and I don't want nothing bad to happen to my mom.

-Marquilla

From The Beat: These sound like the words of a person who is taking a major step from girlhood to adulthood. Yes, your mom needs you to step up and be mature, but also, YOU need you to step up, because you have read dreams in life, and who can help you achieve your dreams besides you - your own best ally?

Afraid to Lose My Sister

I am afraid to lose my sister. She has sickle cell, and if you don't know it's a blood disease and you can't cure it. So that's why I'm scared to lose my sister.

-Bubbles

From The Beat: Oh no, Bubbles, we never knew you had this sad illness in the family? Do you and your sister talk about it sometimes, about it what it feels like for her to be sick, about what it feels like to you, worrying about her?

Free All My Hittas

Man I miss my boys, and when we used to be on block, holdin' it down and getting' dough. But when I get out I intend to change my ways and go the right way. And I'ma still stay in school

-Lil' T

From The Beat: We hope you follow through on these words, because the system and street life are no place for a person of your talent and ambition. The world is much bigger than what you've seen so far, and you have the right to explore it!

A Good Day I Had With My Mother

The best time I had with my momma was when I was with my sister, all of us together. I was at the house. So I miss my family, and hope to see my niece, and nephew soon I know I will some day, when I get out of this shhh hole.

-Bubbles

From The Beat: But the secret isn't just to get out, right? It's also to stay out. What is your plan to make sure you stay out, for real, so you can be with your family for good?

There's Going To Be Ups And Downs With A Black President

Since he's a black male, do you think he is going to help us black people? Since he has black kids.

I really don't care what race he is. As long as he stops the war. Stop the violence Bush!

-Lil' Dave

From The Beat: You are the kind of voter we need to have actively involved in the political process, because you have the wisdom to see beyond the surface traits. Instead you focus on the issues that are important to you - which makes you smarter than about 90 percent of the newspaper writers and television reporters out there covering the elections. We need to add your voice to the mix!

Don't Wanna Lose You

Well I don't want to lose anyone anymore because I already got a lot of grief. But the most I don't want to lose is my mom, because I loves her a lot and she loves me too cause I'm different then other hide I take good care of her. I go to school get good grades I don't smoke drink or nothing.

And I when I came in here for something I didn't do and helping to get out soon.

The second person I don't want to lose is my girlfriend. I am in love with her a lot and I miss her too. I don't want to lose her because she's really caring most beautiful and respectful. We been together since 4. 7. 06 and hope to last forever with her and my mom.

-Cherry

From The Beat: We're sorry to hear that you're in here for something that you didn't even do. Stay strong and hopefully everything comes to the light. We're also glad to hear that you do go to school and handle your business. Stay positive even though you're in a messed up situation. Take it as a test, and try to pass it.

Who Are You Mot Afraid to Lose

The person that I would be most afraid to lose is my best friend. The reason why is because she is the only one that cares about me. She is always there when I need her and if she is not I can call her and she would be right there.

I am also most afraid to lose my mom because I don't know her and I want to get to know her better.

-Bubbles

From The Beat: Well, you shouldn't be here in the first place, but you did what you did. But when you get out you should really take some time from your busy schedule and try to get to know the person that you say you're most afraid to lose.

In Jail

I feel so ashamed being here. I thought this chapter in my life was closed but it mysteriously got opened back up. I feel like a nut but hey all I can do is change for '08. Get money the right way I have a life outside of these burgundy sweat pants and pink jail shirt.

I wear Jordans and keep my hair freshly done. I'm use to drinking kool aid, frying chicken, and taking bubble baths. But hey I didn't commit a murder so they can't keep me for life next time I'll think twice,

-Kalei

From The Beat: Yeah next time think three times. We don't want you making any crucial mistakes where it may cost you your life or freedom.

Mom

I am afraid to lose my mother. She's always been here for me. She never left me alone, and when I needed her the most she was there for me through thick and thin. If I lose her I don't know what I'm gonna do without her. That's why she's the one I'm most afraid of losing.

-Lil' Manny

From The Beat: Everybody talks about being afraid to lose their mom, but nobody thinks about their mom when they're out there on the street getting in trouble. Why is that? Why does it takes us jail to realize who are the most important people in our lives?

Two Important People

I have two people that I don't want to lose in my life. Those are my mom and my sister. Both of them are being threatened to get taken away from me by my dad. Neither my sister or my mom like him they think he is a bad influence on me but I don't think he is. He is being my father like he is supposed to, just like I will when I have kids.

But my mom and sister always tell me that he is always beating them but I don't think he is.

My dad wants me to move to Tennessee with him, but my mom and sister don't want me to go because they think if I do they won't ever hear from me again, even though my dad will let me stay in contact with them. I am really thinking about going with him because so many bad things have happened to me, like me coming to juvenile hall. I feel like I need a new start for now but if I move with my dad I am afraid that they want to talk to me anymore. What do I do?

-Beau

From The Beat: First of all if your mom and sister are trying to tell you that your dad beats them. You should listen to them. Or do some investigating 'cause that's not cool. That's sick. That's your pops and everything but do you really want to move far away from your mom and sister? What happens if this doesn't work out? And if you're worried about having a fresh start, you can always have a fresh start anywhere it's all in your heart and your mind.

Uh Oh

Thought he was my potna, all it took was getting lied to by the cops. One day I was in a car me and my ex potna D. We drove by two dudes that had problems with one of my gang homeboys so my ex potna D said

"Hey bro those two dudes got problems with the homeboy," he said let's go see if they still got problems. I said let's go. We got out and walked towards them they were walking away I whistled and they came back I walked up and said what you got problems with my homie? One of them said me. I instantly started firing on him while my ex potna D fought the other dude we was chunking 'em for a min then I saw D getting beat up so I pulled out a knife and stabbed him just so he could get off my potna, then we ran.

In the next few days D told me the detectives came to his house and they had a pic of me and five other people. "I didn't point you out," he said.

The next few days I got pulled over they took me for probable cause of stabbing. Someone told me D told them it was me. I new for sure he did 'cause they knew my first and last name.

Plus when the detective talked to him they told him it's either him or someone who I know that he knows told me he snitched. And they knew he didn't do it so now I'm here. I was told the most I'd do is three years in the Y. I go to court soon, hopefully I don't hit the Y but if I do ain't shhh I can do later.

-Lil' Knuckles

From The Beat: That's an ugly situation to be in. But just cause the police know your first and last name don't mean your homie snitch. The police already know your first and last name. And if your boy did tell on you you'll see it in the paperwork. Good luck on your case and take advantage of this time to try to straighten your life out. That lifestyle is only going to guarantee you that you'll be coming back to these institutions.

Who Am I

Who am I? I'm a son of God

Who sell coke on the street and enjoys to rob

Who am I? I'm someone who don't listen

Who get a lot of girls but refer them as ...

Who am I? A ninja dart, bus' that thang

When a ninja come to the block ain't afraid to bang

Who am I? A ninja that don't be slippin'

When 5-0 come around that corner I stay calm
don't be trippin'

Who am I? Someone that wants to change
Don't be labeled as a criminal and do not slang

Who am I? Someone that wants to be free

'Cause I know Juvenile hall aint a place to be.

-Guis

From The Beat: Who are you? We really don't know. You, either wants to be some thing positive or negative. If you step in between you will get caught in the crossfire. Juvenile hall is not the place to be, and neither is the streets getting into trouble.

Loss Of A Role Model, My Brother

My role model is my brother. I lost him one year ago and I can't get over that. But I'm still living still breathing still tryna live life without my role model.

Hopefully I make my momma proud and stay at my group home in LA and make a change.

-Lil' Damani

From The Beat: We're sorry to hear about your brother. Now you have to step it up one time and accomplish all your goals. You said you want to be out and stay out then do it. Do your program and try to make a change. You already have seen what the outcomes of the street life can be.

One Day

One day I know she's gonna have to go
One day I ain't gonna be able to talk, play,
Get to hug her no mo

When she go

I know it's gonna cause a lot of heartache and pain

But I have to just accept it

And keep my self from going insane

I don't know what I will do when she's gone

I don't want to see the day of the death of my mom.

-Real Militant

From The Beat: We all don't wanna see nobody die. Especially the important people like our best friends, and family. But death is a part of life. Eventually one day your mom will pass away from natural cause. So you shouldn't be wasting your time coming to the halls. You should be take this time to appreciate your mom and show her how much you care for her.

Mom

I am afraid of losing my mother because she is the role model in my life. I couldn't afford to lose the woman who birthed me. The woman who raised me in the world that I'm in today. My mother is the important thing in my life because she and my dad are the only ones that believed in me and what I believe in.

She is the figure that shape me into what I am today outside of jail. If I ever lost my mother I don't know what I would do in life. That is last thing I want to happen because I am very close with my mother. My mom is my heart and soul of wakening of every morning. The strength of me getting through the long day in the hall. She inspires me to get through any obstacle.

-Anthony

From The Beat: You really do a good job describing how important your mother is. You should really tell her how you feel or show her this piece when it gets published. Also show her love by staying out of places like this!

Who am I? Solid

I'm solid and I get down for mine,

Building up solid hoods and rolling over dummies,

'Cause it's a lot of fake cats out in these streets

So I keep it solid 'cause that's all I know and all I see

So I gotta stay true to what I know

They call me lil' animal, really a polar bear

Beastin' out wit' dreads in my hair.

-Lil' Solid

From The Beat: The thing about being human is that we are by nature explorers. We learn, we grow, we refuse to accept limits. You say "I gotta stay true to what I know" but what's to stop you from getting to know more? To know what it's like to climb a mountain, ski in fresh snow, take a college exam, meet people from foreign countries? Don't limit yourself - physical prisons are painful, but it's mental prisons that kill the soul.

Mom On My Mind

The person I'm mostly scared of losing is my mom because just the simple fact she is the woman who brought me to this earth and she has always been there for me.

My mom has been a dad and a mom, and has struggled most of her life tryin' to satisfy us by having us in an apartment with a roof on top. She has always been worried on hard times but we had made it. I couldn't loose her.

-A loving son

From The Beat: Sounds like your mom is a very important and special person in your life. She really sacrificed so you guys can have a roof over your head. And now you're in Juvenile hall. Now she's worried. You should be on the outs helping your mom out.

My Mama Understands Me

The person I am most afraid to lose is my mama, because I was with her for my whole life. And if she was to be gone, I still got family, but I wouldn't have anyone to talk to about things that I did, 'cause she understands and just laugh at just what I say.

When you get locked up in jail, who you call?

When you need money, who you gone ask?

-Doe Goody

From The Beat: Our family and loved ones give us support, affection, and above all guidance. Is it your mom who gives you all these things? Or do you have other family members who also give them to you? Of your whole family, who is the one who gives you the most and best guidance?

Thinking Of My Nephew

I'm most afraid to lose my nephew because he's the world to me right now. It seemed like when he was born it changed the way I see life.

Before he was born I really didn't care about life now that he's here it's like I have everything to live for. Like when I walk in the room he always puts I smile on my face. He makes me do the right thing in life. He makes me want to do what I said I was gonna that I never got around to doing it. My nephew is my son, my nephew is my dad, my cousin and my best friend.

-Lil' M

From The Beat: That's great that you look at life differently now. Now do you see more positive things in your life? How did everything change for you when your nephew was born? What're you trying to get out of life now that you see it from a whole different angle?

Who Am I

Me I'm Lil Damani and I'm trying to get out of jail so when I get out I'm gon' stay out 'cause jail ain't where it's at on momma's.

-Lil' Damani

From The Beat: We're glad to hear that you wanna get out and stay out. How are you gonna go about accomplishing that? How are you gonna avoid the temptations out on the streets?

Questions And Answers

1. I think I am the way I am because of the way I was brought up in the world, meaning who and how I was raised.

2. Loss of a role model

One of my biggest role models in my life I would have to say is my uncle, and when he got locked up, I didn't think wrong of him. I just thought that he did the wrong thing at the wrong time. But I just wrote him and told him not to worry about me because I know right from wrong.

3. The only time that I could say that I was down on my luck is coming here to the hell because I feel hecka mad at myself because I put myself without being watch like a hawk, or having to for something.

4. I think that I am most afraid to lose my mom or dad because I already lost too many people in my life, and my mom or dad I feel is all I have left.

-Waylin

From The Beat: We feel like each of these answers showed an insight into a certain part of your life and who you are - it seems like on the one hand you've had lots of loss and betrayal, but on the other hand, you've also been lucky enough to have people in your life, like your parents, who really stick with you through thick and thin. Do you think, in the long run, that it was good or bad for you, getting caught and locked up?

Stop Faking

When I'm in here I see a lot of fake people talking 'bout they buss that thang, they sell coke, and get money but when I see them on the outs they hella dusty. I ain't talking 'bout nobody, but ninjas be wolfing. Me, Lil' Damani, I ain't got to explain my self 'cause I get down, that's just how I feel straight up!

-Lil' Damani

From The Beat: There are a lot of people that are probably lying about what they really do. But you know what, forget those people and worry about yourself. Those people are not worth your time. You said you wanted to be out and stay out then do it. Don't let anything side track you. You have to stay focused.

Down On Your Luck

Many times in my life I felt that anything was possible. Some times I felt & fell down. Perhaps that's of my own doing or perhaps it's fate. Many times my mouth was the main thing that got me in a situation. Such as my incidents may be avoided if you just "shut up".

This current situation certainly has me feeling that absolutely no one cares even though I know that is not true. Prayer helps and so do shrinks. Crazy I am not. It really helps to talk things out. God and family that's what is important (those two figures) always care about you no matter what!

-Bird

From The Beat: You right sometimes we can avoid crucial situations just by keeping our mouth shut. We have to learn from the mistakes we make though. Now you know. And you're right family is always going to be there for you 'cause they care.

Afraid to Lose My Mom

I am most afraid to lose my mom because she my mom. She the one that gave me life. She always come visit me when she got time, she also leave work early and visit me. When she its through a thick glass window. It sucks. That's why when I get out, I'ma make my mom happy.

-Linh

From The Beat: We're glad you hate that thick glass window. We hate it too. A mother and her son should never be separated by glass. What will it take to keep you free? What friendships, habits, lifestyles will you need to change?

Back Track

Too late to rewind

Therefore I unwind

Time to drop the ammo

Six-feet under, I break out to the gravel

But that's only when I have to decide not to attack you,

'Cause I'm gonna be free soon,

Way high on the moon

A little too far

Living on Mars

Sittin' on stars,

Free from these bars

That contain me

But can not tame me

I choose to be confused you see

Obviously fighting this insanity

Cut my wrist and you see I bleed Hennessey.

-No Hesitation Money's Motivation

From The Beat: You need to cut the slack off/ and stay on track before you fall back off/ And these walls can't contain you mentally, but physically they can/ Why you drink so much heem, we don't even understand/ staying under the influence ain't gonna keep you outta jail/ We know you wanna succeed, we know you ain't trying to fail/ OK NHMM, we know you have mad skills, so we'll look for some knowledgeable pieces in the coming weeks!

Loss Of A Role Model

I found my mom as a role model because she had two kids and my dad was never around. She had bought this house for us all by our self. She raised me and my brother. I remember she bought us a dog and even though we never had our dad around she always did her best to make us happy. After a while my mom started to date this guy.

When my mom was at work he always used to beat me and stuff. I was always afraid to tell my mom about it. So whenever she came home I felt like she was my hero because she saved me from him. Until another day I had to deal with him for about a year and I finally got brave enough to tell her and she left him.

She was totally my hero for that because I was hella happy. But after she broke up with him she started hanging out with different people. And now she is in a gang and in prison. I don't see her much and now my brother is like my hero.

-Cave Man

From The Beat: That's a sad story to hear. You endured some pretty harsh situations. At least your mom had the love and strength to leave that guy for you. But it seems as though she made some bad decisions. Don't give on her just yet. Even though she's a grown up doesn't mean that she can't make mistakes either. She just has to learn from her mistakes like you do.

Who Am I?

I'm a lone militant with a crazy thought process
And a careless attitude

I'm a paper chaser

I am a person with deep regret and heavy doses of pain

I wanna change

But every time I'm chillin' I'm sippin' on privilege

Or sniffing cane chasin' dollars and rollin' purple

Posted up

Off drugs that make you suicidal

But on a real note I am

I'm just so self destructive

I begin to find no value of life

Even though I got a bright future

If I change I'm enslaved by this currency

I have no goals just to clock dollars.

-Lil' Young Rebel

From The Beat: You might be a lone militant, and paper chaser. But you're also an incarcerated young man. And if you keep living the way you're living right now, you're gonna grow up and be an old man that's incarcerated. You have a bright future but we don't know why you trying to make it dark.

Doing Good, But in A Bad Way

Up on my luck -- I'm up on my luck, I'm doing good but in a bad way.

Good 'cause I'm coming up, but bad because I'm hurting people at the same time. Hurting people by selling them things I know are no good for them.

Down on my luck. I'm down on my luck when I'm doing bad. Doing bad is when I'm not making the average amount of money. I was down on my luck when I got caught and brought here.

All I could say is try to stay up on your luck Never down 'cause then you won't be around

-Tay

From The Beat: It's good to see that you're not afraid of looking the consequences of your actions in the eye. You need money, we all do - but it's SO not worth it to earn it the bad way. If we came in with information about organizations that can get you legit jobs, would you want to hear about it? Hit us up if it's a yes.

My Mother, My Love

One of the main people I am afraid to lose is my mother, because she has been in my life for all my life so it would be hard on me to loose her. Sometimes I think about what I would do if I lost her. I also think about what I'm going to do when I lose her. Because everybody has to go someday. But anyway that's one of the people I would be very afraid of losing.

-Real Militant

From The Beat: You're right. Everybody has to go someday. That's why instead of wasting your time and doing senseless acts that strip away your freedom, you should be chilling with the people you care about the most.

Who Are You?

*Who are you - I

I'm that person that try to achieve

*Who are you -

That person that trying to stay out of the dark

*Who are you -

That black African male

*Who are you -

A dreadhead

*Who are you -

Jeremy,

-Jeremy

From The Beat: It's great the way you set this poem up. It's like the first four lines, show your dreams, your fears, your outside classification, and finally your street label, but then the last line says the part that is a combination of the first four - plus that special unique flavor that makes you one of a king, the soul and personality that goes into making you Jeremy.

Young Runner

Was up Beat, this is Lil' Capy. Well I'm back in the hall. I ran with my homey, because camp was hella weak. I had popped pills and was smoking hella trees and I guess I turned myself in. All I remember is I woke up in the hall.

I was hella mad, but I ain't tripping. I'm going back to camp and I'm gonna run again, 'cause I don't give a shhh. and I'm from Oakland. You know how we get down.

I need to go to my hood, I'm hood sick! Well I'm out beat.

-Lil' Capy

From The Beat: You're hood sick, but it does seem like there was some small part of you, even on pills and weed, that KNEW you had to find a new way to get healthy. A life of looking over your shoulder - for enemies or for police - is no life at all. And you knew it - we know you may not feel this way, but we are proud of you for turning yourself in. Because the only way through this mess is to work your way to the other side. Hope you don't run the next opportunity you get, 'cause it only gets harder.

What It Do Beat

What I'm really afraid to lose is my lil one. If I was to lose him I would feel like my life is over. I think of him everyday wondering what he is doing and if he will remember me when I come home. I sit here in juvenile hall stressing about my female and family missing them. I don't know.

If I don't slow down and think about life and education I'm going to lose it to these damn streets and I don't want that. So I need to just be easy and be around the fam. If I do that I'll be cool.

-Need To Be Cool

From The Beat: Yeah man, you sound like you've realized what you really need to do. It's not gonna be easy, but nothing is easy. Not even easy money is easy cause it can get you into a lot of trouble. You have bigger responsibilities now. You have to take care of your kid. Get out and go be the best father that you can.

Cold in Life

Maybe I am who I am because the streets make you change and they make you cold in life. Plus the homies that they took out of your life makes you who you are.

Well Beat, until next time it's your boy, Crazy.

RIP – Big Joe

-Crazy

From The Beat: This is a short piece but it shows a lot of wisdom and insight. It's true that the street living is cold, and certainly the pain of losing people you care about (often in some sudden and violent way) is even colder, but the next question is – what makes people turn to the streets in the first place?

My Idol, My Friend, A Part of Me

The person I'm most afraid to lose is my mama, because without her there wouldn't be no me. Without my mom shhh would be crazy, and I'm pretty sure that's how most ninjas feel about their mom.

Shhh, even though I been in and out of jail a lot of times, my moms still been there for me. My mom is not just my parent. She's my idol, my friend and also a part of me.

My mom is the most important person in my life.

-Lil' Mark

From The Beat: The feelings you describe for your mom are so deep, tell us more about the ways that she inspires you to be a better person, and to do better out there in the world.

My Gran-Gran

The person I'm afraid to lose most is my granny, my gran-gran, the person I love most. If my granny passed away I would probably lose it and go around hurting people for the rest of my life.

Me and my granny have a special bond and a love that is so strong that if I lost her I would feel like the other topic #3 -- down on my luck.

Just thinking about it makes me sad or down inside.

-Lil' Turk

From The Beat: We like the way you combined two topics into one piece. It's like you can really see the big picture. As sad as it is to think of losing her, remember that you will never lose the strength that comes from the bond you and she share.

Afraid To Lose My Father

I'm most afraid to lose my father. He means a lot to me and takes care of the family.

Also if I lost him right now I wouldn't be able to learn from him any more he's been here for me all my life and when you have somebody real close, you don't want to lose them.

-Lil' K

From The Beat: Your dad would be happy to see this piece. Tell us what some of the things are that you learned from him. What's the most valuable lesson he ever taught you?

A Place to Go Home To

I think I am afraid to lose family

Because that seems like the only thing that makes me proud.

'Cause I hear people say, oh I hate my mom and I think I know people that wish they had a family to go home to.

So that is what I am afraid of losing.

-Ricky Rick

From The Beat: Sometimes it takes being locked up to make us realize how good we have it at home. Oh – and in terms of being proud, we hope you're also proud of your writing talent!

Young Black Brother

Who am I, I am a young black brother incarcerated and tryin' to learn my lesson by not coming back here, 'cause I'm on my way to CYA, wishing I would of never robbed that person that way

But when I get out I'm gonna get a job, go to school and get my life together, before I can get kids or anything that have big responsibilities.

That's who I am.

-Lil' Kari

From The Beat: We have the greatest hopes that if anyone can come out of CYA a stronger, more positive, more powerful person, it's you. We hope we hear from you again!

If I Was the President

If I was the president I would change a lot of things. Like I would raise money to build homes in New Orleans and I would change how things in Africa are. I would change the thing about the death penalty. I think no man should be able to say somebody deserves to be put to death. I think only rapist and people who do things to kids or women should be put to death. I think people could change overtime.

-Young Mari

From The Beat: Everybody changes over time. Some people change for the better some people change for the worse. But you don't have to be the president to do all the things you are talking about. One person can make a difference. Look at Martin Luther King. He wasn't a president but he really had an impact across the whole nation to this day.

Real Talk

In the morning I may wake up to smile or cry.
I might live through the day but in the night I might die,
I don't know what's comin' next, but I'm eager to see,
No matter what happens, I'm gonna always do me.

I'm gonna live my life to the fullest,
'cause it's my first and my last,
I can't waste no time cryin', and thinkin' about the past,
In time if I lose, I know I tried my best.
And if I ever punk out, I must have been put in to rest.

-Angelo

From The Beat: We agree when you say "I'm gonna always do me". But we feel like the street life doesn't give you room to be you. You have a GED, you could go to college, you could be a poet, a writer, a teacher, an inspiration. THAT would be you being you. We hope you never punk out.

The Gangsta Blues

When it rains outside, these feelings won't wash away,
Only tears will hide, waiting for a clear day.

I can't even think straight, that's why I get high.
Smoke purple, drink bottles, hit cocaine lines.
Never pop a pie 'cause I'll probably lose my life.
I ain't scared of death, I'm just trying to not catch 25,
Look in my eyes; no one can ever feel my pain.
I'm insane but smart in the brain, trapped in the game,
my dreams were broken.

And my heart been frozen, so I'm livin' the life,
My choice been chosen, I'ma die one day, but life goes on.
When that day comes get drunk and slap my song –
"playa cards right."

-Angelo

From The Beat: So yeah, we called this one gangsta blues, because it's such a sad and tragic song that anyone caught in street life will understand. But it's a song for the end of a person's life, and your life is just beginning. It's a song for someone who is too far gone, someone who knows it's too late. In your case, it's not too late, and you know it. Let someone else live this story – you've got other stories waiting for you.

Ready to Get Out

The way I am has no meaning how my mother raised me. The streets turned me out when I was young. My mom did everything she could to keep me out of trouble. The neighborhood and people I grew up with had a big impact on me. I'm trying to change though. This might be my last piece in The Beat because I might get out.

For all you people in the hall if you're coming to camp this crap is very easy don't run, just pimp it. I've been in and out of here since I was twelve, and now it's time to change.

This is going to be my last time in the Hall. I'm about to be eighteen and I need to stay out of trouble I have a plan this time to succeed. I'll write you next time I get locked up.

-Lil' Ken

From The Beat: We were with you all the way through this piece, right until the last line. Of course we want to hear from you, but we don't like the way you assume you'll get locked up... It's as if you expect that you're going to end up back here, a place that no human being belongs.

The World Is Cold

The world is cold you could say

I'm hot the city on it but I call it my block

Why they will give a sixteen

Ten years for having sex with a fifteen year old

Even if he didn't know how old she was

And they gave my uncle fifteen years

He did his twenty five years

Then fifteen more and they still won't let him out

It's cold how police can beat somebody up and get away with it

It's cold how they take us to jail for something they sold us

This world it cold one day it's gone change

I'm tired of cowards speaking on my name

Young Mari The Great.

-Young Mari

From The Beat: The world is cold. How can people just sell dope and poison their own people for a few dollars? How can people just shoot some one just because they have more money? How can people want to take from the next man? Why don't they hustle for their own shhh? This whole world is cold.

Down On My Luck

I'm down on my luck, why because I'm in jail. I just lost a love one and I don't know where my case is going. Also where I'm gone end up. I'm down on my luck ready for my luck to step back up.

-Marcus

From The Beat: Hopefully today things are a bit brighter, hang in there!

Fake Friends

Your so-called friends will be with you when you do dirt. Like me, my so-called friend and I were stealing cars, and it was cool when we didn't get caught.

But when you do then that's to show you if he is your real friend or not, next thing you know is that he's already ratting on you, now you're doing time and when you set out he wears to you that he didn't snitch.

-James

From The Beat: You've probably heard Street Soldiers say "A friend will never lead a friend to danger," right? What do you think of that? Maybe your true friends are the ones who would put you on a positive path, where you're not stealing cars and getting in trouble?

The Inner me

I am lost of a model

Trapped in the bottle

Smoking on a pound of weed

While sitting in a bottle sipping on a vodka bottle

I got yo' girlfriend wit' me

Now she's on uno

Now she's on two

But Yung Boe all on three

Boy straighter than an arrow

Faster than a Lambo

Gone wait till a light turn green

Neva hot, never cool

Paid less fo' the shoes

And my flow is strong like the sea

I float like air

I'm strong like a bear

And love that white like sheets ninja life is turning pail

All on the count of three somebody get me down

Boe never been a clown

If you cats out there don't know me

I'm a young OG

Stay fresh every week

And I'm shinning like my teeth

I blind like the light

Never wrong but right

And this here explains me.

-Boe

From The Beat: Nice flow/ But do you know what direction that your life might go?/ Aint nothing wrong with blinging or shining/ And there's definitely nothing wrong with getting money and grinding/ But you gotta find a way to shine/ Without getting caught up and doing time/ Cause trip/ You can get money illegally and go to jail or you can have your freedom and get it legit/

Who Am I?

Hey how you doing Beat? I am who I am now, because of all my down homies. I think I'm a young respectful, individual that cares a lot. I am who I am because of my family, especially my mother, because she was the one that brought me into this world, and if it wasn't for her I would not even be in here by now.

My whole family has been here for me, though. I love my loved ones, and do anything for them. And they also made me who I am.

-Lucky

From The Beat: It's good to see how much love you got for your family, and especially your mom. What does that love make you want to be in life? What are your plans for the future? Who or what do you want to become?

Locked Up But Free

The reason I feel locked up but free in here (Camp Sweeney) is that you're locked up but you get a lot of freedom. You actually get to go home for a certain amount of time depending on your badge or behavior.

But let's not forget you're still locked up, because you still eat jail food wear jail clothes, and can't do what you want, when you want. And that's why I feel locked up but free.

-Tay

From The Beat: The thing about life on the outs is that when you have a goal in mind, you ALSO can't do what you want when you want. You have to show up for work, you have to show up for school, you have to run errands for the family and take care of yourself. Of course that's different from Camp rules, but do you think camp helps give you habits that you can use later for success? Or do you feel like it's just 'doing time'?

Man, Pause

Who am I?
I'm smart. I get it how I live,
Who are you?
Are you smart, kind, and get it how you live?
Me, I go, got dough, and don't get it slow,
Who am I?
Man, pause. I don't even know...

-Tay

From The Beat: Hah, we love the way this poem ends up, because truthfully there are a lot of adults who don't know who they are either. We are mysteries to ourselves, and we all have more evil, good, strength, and weakness in our hearts than we even realize? Who are we? We're potential...

A Different Perspective

I personally don't follow the elections. But that's because I really never had the time and I really never cared. Because a white dude always gets to run the country.

But how there's always a possibility of a colored president, the country might be ran from a different prospective so that's good.

-Boxer

From The Beat: We promise to keep you posted on the elections as they come - it looks like it's going to be a tight race, and a historic election. One of the candidates is black. The other is a woman. We hope you do start following the process and voting too. If everyone who is in the system voted, politicians would care a lot more about people that get caught up in the system!

What I Am

The things and the paths I've taken weren't something I wanted; I have robbed people, people's houses. Even though I always knew it was wrong I thought "better you then them".

'Cause before I became a gangster I was robbed, and I knew exactly how it feels. Since that day I swore to myself that, that was never going to happen to me again.

So now instead of me being the victim, I'm the aggressor, so that how it is and it will be.

-Boxer

From The Beat: Are you sure that there are only those two choices: Victim and Aggressor? What about the person who says no, I'm a free man, there are other ways I could go. You could be a person that fights for peace on the streets; you could be someone who protects little kids from being robbed. You could be a person who walks out on all the b.s. and says "I'm gonna make my time on this planet mean something." Can you imagine if Jesus Christ had decided to become an aggressor, instead of an aspiring leader? That would have been messed up.

A New Chapter

My eyes be red like Cyclops off of X-Men
I don't know nobody getting married but you can call me the best man

I can write all day without taking a rest man
Writing so good you can feel it in your chest man
I'm like a dragon cause I spit out fire

You can say I'm major

When it come to my pen hitting the paper

Yeah I'm a rapper so what can you say

My writings are invincible cause they can't be touched

If I can't be a writer

I might be a rapper

This the beginning of my life

Call it the new chapter.

-Young Mari

From The Beat: You have some amazing talent kid. You need to stop doing whatever you doing that's bringing you to the halls and hit the lab.

Something In Life

I'm gon' be something one day I gotta be
Still have dreams about when the suckas shot at me
I got so much to write about I could just let it go like a water fountain

And my writing stack high as the mountains
30 pages in two days I do that on a bad day
Sometimes I wake up and feel like I'm gon' have a bad day

In this place I don't want to stay

The judge man he don't play

He only gave me two chances and I failed

What's gone happen in the future?

Only time will tell.

-Young Mari

From The Beat: Only time will tell, but you have control of future. The only thing you don't have control of right now is the fact that you got to listen to staff and you locked up. But what you want to do once you get out is up to you. If you want to continue doing what you were doing before, that brought you here, then that's on you.

Looking For Love

Looking for love in all the wrong places

I had a girl friend I called her phone

And another dude answered

This alone

Kills me slowly like cancer

She tried to tell me it was her brother

That's why you should always make an agreement to never lie to each other

I know how it feels to be played like a fool

I had a girlfriend

Every time she was with me her phone use to ring

I answered it one day

A dude said what are you doing answering my girl phone

I didn't cuss her out I just told her to leave me alone

That's why I love he ladies of all sizes and races

I was looking for love in all the wrong places.

-Young Mari

From The Beat: You were looking in the wrong place! But don't give up, you have to keep searching. You just need to be more selective. That girl didn't love you man. You need to find a girl that loves you the way you want to love her too!

I'm Tryin' To Change

I'm tryin' to change but it's hard to do

It's a whole lot of stuff I went through

And every time I try to change

I end up doing the same thang

I was so sad when my potnas died

So I got to be the one to survive

And when I write I really feel alive

Hold on to your seat it's like a roller coaster ride

I've been front to back side to side

I wish I was a bird cause I sure would fly

Away from this life style

No more fast cars no more living wild

Don't try to bite my style

That's something nobody could do

You will get a flat head cause boy I'm screwed

If you don't get that part on well it just ain't for you

Than Young Mari call me Mr. Beat Within.

-Young Mari

From The Beat: Change is hard man. Nobody ever said it was gonna be easy. Sometimes things happen to us in the past and we can't let it go. But we have to move on. That's just a chapter in the book. This is your life, and your book. It's still hella early in the book it's up to you to write the next few chapters.

Change Your Life For Yourself

I don't know why, when people get locked up, they try and turn their lives to God. Let me be the one to break it to you, there is no God! All that shhh is made up! Someone hella long ago wrote the Bible and made all that bullshhh up! So stop believin' in all tha bullshhh and be real. Don't use dat God shhh as an excuse to change yo' life. If you gonna change yo' life, do it for yo'self or yo' family. Ninjas are quick to show love to a homie, but never show they family any kind of love.

-Smoke

From The Beat: You may feel there is no God and you could be right, but many people sincerely have strong beliefs that there's a God who helps them, gives them strength, comfort and guidance. So even if you think it's nonsense, can you respect and leave them alone about their religious beliefs? If they change their lives and stop hurting others, does it matter if they did it for themselves, their families, their God, or all of them?

Wish

I wish that I can get a good girl that love me. An' when I tell her I love her, she will tell me she love me back. I wish that my girl have a good face. An' I wish she looks better than Beyonce. I wish that me an' this girl can look at the birds, have fun, an' be free. I wish one day that me an' this girl can get me some money some day. I have one kid that have his life planned out.

-Marko

From The Beat: You have such a good heart. You deserve a good girl, one who sincerely loves you. Why don't you start thinking now about finishing school and figure out what kind of job you want, what work you can get, so that you'll get yourself established with some income. Also, maybe any girlfriend you might have will be working, too, so together you can create your home and someday, a family.

Something In Life

I want to be something in life. I don't want to be like my father. He been going to the pen in and out. I want to help my mother get out of the 'hood. I want to be the wise one in the family. Because everybody said I was going to be a thug. I don't want that. That's why I want to get myself right. I want to be with God 'cause I want to go up with God. That how I feel. And that's who I am.

-Harvey

From The Beat: We hope you are able to make these wishes come true. You have a model of what you don't want to be. No choose a model of someone you do want to be, and make a plan.

You Would Never Know

You would never know
That I love you
If I didn't tell you
You would never know
How I feel about you
If I didn't tell you
You would never know
How long I had this feel for you
If I never told you
An' if I never told you this
You would never know
How I feel about you

-Marko

From The Beat: There are a whole lot of ways to let people know how you feel about them, if you want them to know without your actually saying so—just hang with them, be nice to them, tell them funny stories, help them out. Sometimes you can feel it's too soon to actually tell your friend in words how you feel, and you'd be right. If she wants you to get closer to her, she'll probably let you know, and welcome your words. You've written a really sweet, tender poem to her. Why don't you send it to her?

A Real Homie

A real homie will tell you when you are doing bad
A real homie will have your back when you are in trouble

A real homie is down for whatever
A real homie will tell you that they love you all the time
'Cause a real homie is your mom

-Marko

From The Beat: It sounds like your mom is really affectionate and honest with you. How is she managing without you, while you're up at the Ranch? Doesn't she need you home? Don't you need to be home? So when you're free again, how will you make sure you won't ever mess up, get arrested and sent away again?

Tough Guys

A real funny thing to me is watching all these tough guys. They let little shhh boost their confidence so much that they start thinkin' they're killas and gangstas. Like it was just one guy in the halls who was really just a regular guy, but then I see him writin' in The Beat like he's all big and bad, knowin' he's in there for somethin' he didn't even do. Then he start braggin' 'bout being in Max, knowin' he be up there cryin' and shhh. He's supposed to be a gangsta, talkin' all this nonsense, knowin' he ain't never busted a grape when it counts. But I'll just laugh at him, 'cause he's a real "tough guy"... sike. But, yeah, there's even some punks up here who think they're some real thugs, 'cause they're up at Log Cabin. But I see the real and I just let 'em think they're tough, 'cause in the end they're just setting themselves up for failure.

I don't wanna be the one to crush their dreams, but sometimes I just gotta keep it real. Don't let juvenile hall and a sucka ass placement boost your confidence, 'cause it really ain't shhh. Don't write all this bullshhh, just handle your business and let that speak for itself.

-Birdman

From The Beat: Sometimes writers do misrepresent what's up with them or their case in The Beat, but that's on them. Sometimes they front because they wish they were who they're pretending to be and/or maybe they're in the process of growing up and trying out by their attitude who they want to grow into. Regardless, can't you understand them, teach them by your example, be friends with them, and even if you're right about your assessments of them, cool it on your harsh judgments?

Ever Yours

What would I do without you? You've done so much in the little time we've shared. All the help and encouragement, you've inspired me to change, and I have. I'm slowly getting away from the gang life, and you got me to stop smokin' that shhh. Baby, you've helped me to get so much closer to my family. Even though we've had so many problems, I just cannot even think of losing you. It would bring so much imbalance into my life. You're a part of my life now.

It's sad how we were arrested, trying to get money for grandma's medication, but at least I didn't bring you down. Without you being out, I wouldn't have anyone to support me. You and my family mean so much to me. All I want is to be with all of you and see all of you smile. My heart is dedicated to no one but you and my family. Amore es Siego, baby. It's a blessing we've met.

-Angelique

From The Beat: This is a lovely love letter. You're lucky to have someone you can count on waiting for you on the outs. We're curious about that crime you described. If you were trying to get medicine for your grandma's medication, have you thought about other ways you might have achieved this goal? After all, you're not providing the medicine she needs now, so there must be other ways to do it. We know that the best medicine your grandma needs is you at home with her. Can you give her that?

JT Speaks Out

TBW: Hi, JT. What's up with you? What would you like to be interviewed about today? What's on your mind that you'd like to talk about?

JT: Life up here at the Ranch.

TBW: Okay, how is it for you up here?

JT: Boring, but I do a lot of thinking.

TBW: What do you think about?

JT: My future, my family, my homies, my girl.

TBW: What do you think about your future?

JT: My future's gonna go in a positive. I'm gonna be on the block, getting money the positive way.

TBW: What positive way do you have in mind?

JT: I'm gonna get a job in the city, then go home, change my clothes, then go to the block.

TBW: What kind of legitimate work would you like?

JT: To work at a bank.

TBW: What kind of work would you want to do in a bank?

JT: I want to be in charge of the money.

TBW: What do you want to do with the money?

JT: Buy a house for my family.

TBW: But that money's not your money, it's the bank's money.

JT: But I'm still gonna get paid.

TBW: You mean, with your salary from the bank, you want to buy your family a house?

JT: Yeah.

TBW: What kind of house do you want for all of your family?

JT: I want a mansion with twenty-five bedrooms and two living rooms, a big ol' kitchen and a down stairs, two inside swimming pools, and a gym and a garage with four different cars inside.

TBW: Wow! You must be willing to work day and night to earn the money to buy all that. What kind of cars do you want?

JT: A Monte Carlo, a Benz sports car, and an Escalade truck! I want a plasma TV and a headset in the back of the Benz, and a Cadillac STS on some 22s.

TBW: You want a TV in the back seat of your Benz?

JT: Yeah!

TBW: Tell us more about your dream house.

JT: I want the marble floors and each room gotta big screen TV that are in the walls, that come down. I want a down stairs with a conference room, where me and my homies do

our talkin' 'bout the block.

TBW: So you're going to earn all this money for your house and cars by working at the bank?

JT: I'm gonna have two jobs, and work at Best Buy.

TBW: Who do you want to live in your house?

JT: Kisha Cole, Kimora Lee Simmons (who owns Baby Phat Clothes,) Beyonce. My girl and my family.

TBW: All those people? It sounds like your home is going to be pretty crowded.

JT: Just kiddin' about Kisha Cole, Kimora Lee Simmons and Beyonce.

TBW: Where is your house going to be?

JT: It's gonna be in the hills of LA, by Hollywood!

TBW: Are you going to produce movies, too?

JT: I'm gonna be a rapper.

TBW: What do you like to rap about?

JT: I rap about money, jewelry, girls, cars, the mansion I'm about to get.

TBW: So your family, your girl and you will all live together in your mansion?

JT: I'm gonna buy a separate house for my family, so they can live far out and do they own thing when I'm on the road.

TBW: Where are you going on the road?

JT: On tour. I don't know yet.

TBW: Don't you have to get a record deal first?

JT: Yeah, maybe. I wanna rap about my dream that I was the president.

TBW: The president of the United States?

JT: Yeah.

TBW: If you were president, what would you want to do for our country?

JT: It would be cracking. You wouldn't have to have a license to drive a car. You could do anything you want to do. There wouldn't be no police, no jails, none of that. I'd free all my homies that are locked down.

TBW: What would you do about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that the US is now involved in?

JT: I'd bring the troupes home. We're not fittin' to fight over no damn oil.

-Jt

From The Beat: Thank you for your free-ranging interview, about all kinds of things that are on your mind and in your dreams. We hope you do get a legitimate job, do well, enjoy it, and save your money so you can invest in all of your dreams.

I Don't Care What People Say

For who don't know me, I'm Sabrina and what makes me me is the fact that I'm known to ride or die for certain people I truly trust. I'm also known as a stubborn person who don't give a damn what anybody has to say, because if it's a female that's saying something, then I just know that she wants to be me, and if it's a ninja, he just want a female like me on they team, which they probably wouldn't be able to handle. If you think you man enough to keep up, then I encourage you to speak to me. Until then, back the hell down before you get knocked down. Love plus trust times loyalty to the second power equals death before dishonor. Live by this rule and you shall live longer than you are expected to.

-Sabrina

From The Beat: If you remain that "stubborn person who don't give a damn what anybody has to say," you'll just keep handing away all the power you possess to an uncaring system of DAs, judges, POs and counselors. You are not alone in the world, but, like the rest of us, must learn to live with a lot of different kinds of people. Their views, their hopes, their dreams and their lives are just as important as yours. What do you think Jesus meant when he said, "Love thy enemies..."?

I'm Mad

My name is Kristy. I can't wait 'til I get out. Being locked up ain't good. If I was at home, I'd be with all my family and friends, doing what we want.

I lost my cousin since I got locked up recently. RIP, Kareem. I love you and you will be missed. You will always be in my heart! Not being able to go to my cousin's funeral or at home, taking care of my grandmother makes me feel mad. When I get out I'ma do what I gotta do to get up off probation. RIP to ma dad. Love, always.

Hopefully I will be home soon. I love ma gramma with all ma heart! I miss ma family. My grams and ma brother—that's ma best friend through thick and thin. I got his back and he got mine. I stay strong, but, yeah, locked up ain't fa me, and I can't wait 'til I get out!

-K

From The Beat: Your understandably mad that you're not home taking care of your grandma and being with those that love you... but who are you mad at? Who gave the system the power it's now using to keep you locked away from your family? You did, and you have the power to act responsibly, and put yourself back in the warm embrace of love at home.

Blame

I don't blame anyone for why I do what I do or why I am like this. I put everything on myself because I wanted to live this life of crime. A lot is always on my mind all the filth all the crime. I see straight through it, but it's good.

-Gucci

From The Beat: Even though we think the influence of others is also responsible for the choices you've made, we don't think blame is very useful. Whether you were always responsible for your choices or not, you are now. So we hope you're prepared for the consequences that come with every choice we make, and every choice we don't make.

Most Afraid To Lose

The person I'm afraid to lose is my mom because she's been there for me since day one, supported me and e'rything, never put me down or anything. If anything happen to her, I don't know what I would do.

Well, that's it Beat. Get you another time late...

-Michael O.

From The Beat: We understand why you would worry about this. If you read some other pieces, you'll see that some people have lost their mother's trust, which can hurt just as much.

Most Afraid Of Losing

The person I'm most afraid of losing is my mom, just because she has always been there through right and wrong. Another reason why is for all the love I have for her and she for me. That's why that's the person I'm most afraid of losing.

-Joel

From The Beat: The time to remember just how much you love your mother is when you are home with her and thinking about doing something dumb that will allow the system to take you from her. You'll have another chance to do that when you walk out of here. Don't blow it.

If I Ever Lost You...

If I ever lost you, I'd feel so lost, so confused, so lonely
I just wouldn't know what to do

I'd lose my mind, my heart and my soul, my sanity
You are that light that shines so brightly in my eyes
You can say you're that song that keeps me standing
strong for all

This is the main reason why, if I ever lost you, mama, I
would cry

Love you, Mama

-Kristina

From The Beat: If you love your mama this much, can you imagine how much she loves you? By allowing yourself to be taken away from her (by doing whatever it was that led you here), you were not showing your mom that love that she needs and deserves. When you get out from under this, we hope you've learned that the most important person in your life is your mom, and that you owe her better than what you've given.

This Is How I Feel

I feel anxious and I can't wait to get out of here and go to my group home. I'm tired of waking up, looking at that damn toilet, so I can't wait for Friday to get to court and take me to my group home. But I hear broke beezies be takin' yo' shhh up in them group homes, 'cause they can't afford they own shhh. But whatever, I ain't trippin'. I just want to get out of here and do the program for three months at the group home.

-Nessa

From The Beat: We hope you go to your placement with an open mind and an attitude that you can benefit from what you learn there. The mindset you bring to the program is the most important variable to determine success or failure.

My Brother

My brother got shot last night and that's not good. I want to get out and have a good life and go to school so I will have a good job. And I like beezies. I'm going to get out.

-Lil' One

From The Beat: Yes, you're going to get out. But then what? It's staying out that requires some effort. Are you up to that?

Who Am I?

Who Am I?

Just a young, trapped brutha

Walkin' on dese streets and surviving is a mutha
Lookin' at da homeless askin' why dey gotta suffa
But if they stayed in schoo' dey'd have a nice suppa
But dat's just da stones
Of a young trapped brutha

-Yung Lz

From The Beat: We hope you understand the importance of the point you are making here, which is that if you don't get your education, you start out very far behind in the race. So, go to school and do what you have to get through it.

Someone I Lost

Let me tell about someone I lost you feel me. After getting involved with the system things got different. Everyone was looking at me in a different way. They looked at me like a gangsta. Known by police as a gang-banger, always kickin' it with the homies, getting pulled over for doing dirt getting locked up.

After doing all that, you lose something. What I lost was my moms. She stopped being there for me. That's a lil something 'bout my life.

A'ight late.

-Moreno

From The Beat: There are some consequences that last forever. We hope this is not one of them, and that you find a way to earn your mother's trust back. That's a valuable thing to lose without working hard to get it back.

Loss Of A Role Model

Every time I lose my role model its death or jail. Sometimes that make me frustrated because I can't find anybody that's going to do right. The thoughts of me following his footstep makes me mad because it's hard out here for black people to do something right and get their credit for it. The next role model I get is going to be 'bout something good. I love my people.

-TB

From The Beat: Yes, it is hard growing up poor in this country, and particularly if you are black. But many people in that category still manage to get through it, to get their education, and to become the adults they choose to be. So can you.

Out

If I was out right now I will be with my mom an' sisters all day. I would take them to the movies; then I would take them to get something to eat. Then take them to get some clothes an' some shoes. Then take them home an' tell them, "It's time to get to bed," 'cause I have been with them all day. I wish I can go home to my mom and sisters.

-Marko

From The Beat: When you're away, incarcerated, you're not there for them for months at a time. Don't they worry about you? Don't they need you to help them out with housecleaning, with rent, maybe babysitting? Wouldn't the best thing you could do for your family is to stay home?

Forget Christmas

I have never been home for Christmas since I was twelve years old. Now I hate Christmas. Christmas is a bullshhh holiday. Every time Christmas came around, I get locked up, so forget Christmas.

-Marko

From The Beat: Is there any connection between Christmas coming each year and your getting locked up? Or is that a coincidence?

RIP Torrellz

Dang, I just want to start off saying RIP to ma bra Torrellz. We really missin' you out here. Why did you have to leave us? I guess it was your time. I miss the times when we used to get high. Ha ha ha. Good times, huh? We use to have the block crackin'. Now you gone.

You shoulda just kept yo' mouth shut bra, and you could've still been here with us. Ha ha, man. But that's Torrell. You can't tell him nothing. But yeah, I'm gone.

-F

From The Beat: Another tragic farewell to a child who should still be living out his life! The tragedy is that you literally "can't tell him nothing" ever again. We don't believe it was "his" time. But we do believe that the lifestyle he led made "his" time come many decades before it should have come. Think about it.

Down On My Luck

I feel like I am down on my luck because am in here and it feel like shhh ain't going right fo' me. I'm going to a group home and all that, but I go to court tomorrow. Maybe stuff will get better for me. I do go to court tomorrow and all I have to say is keep yo head up.

-James

From The Beat: We hope things went well for you in court. Work your way back home by doing good!

Lil Cousins

What's up Beat? I am most afraid to lose my cousins Cec, Ro, Rico. Mari, and all my ninjas, If I lose my ninjas I will be real mad because they are the people with me through bad times. When a ninja was on some stupid shhh, they was there to set a ninja straight. Who I am most afraid to lose is my lil' cousins because I love them to death and I don't know what I will do if I lose my cousins Asha and Shy'ree. I will probably cry all day and night and that's why I don't want to lose anyone I love...

-Davey-D

From The Beat: Of course you don't want the people you love to leave you, especially before they grow up and have full lives! But to avoid losing loved ones at this age, you have to be there to help them. You have to stop doing the things that allow the system to take you from your family. You have to make some changes if you want a full life with your cousins. A word to the wise...

Happy Holidays

What's good wit' da Beat? It's ya boi Lil' Spitta writin' from unit 4. Same shhh, different toilet! You know how it go up in here. I just wanna let everybody know HAPPY HOLIDAYS, Christmas, and a Happy New Year. For all of those dat's locked up an' on da outs, make a new years resolution an' stop getting wrapped up. Because I'm getting tha best present of all. Going back home to my fam a free man. I'm out peace.

-Lil' Spitta

From The Beat: Congratulations on getting the best present you could have — freedom. That's a gift we hope you have learned not to give away again.

Early Release

Yeah, they'll let me out Christmas Eve

A year on the Ranch

I never thought I would leave

I'm back home to celebrate Christmas Day

All I know is

I'm back to stay

-Mystery Man

From The Beat: Congratulations on your freedom! What are your plans for your new year?

Role Models

Aye! What's crackin wit' The Beat? Me, same ol shhh. Just a different chapter in my book I'm trying to finish up.

Today I was looking over the topics and this one caught my eye. The topic read "Down On Your Luck." I was thinking am I down on my luck. So I started listing a few bad events I've been going through over the last five months since I been in here. I was getting in trouble almost every day, cursing the staff out, getting room time all the time. I couldn't wait til I go to court.

When I went to court, they told me I won my 707. It's one more week to Christmas and I got the opportunity to get released! I can't wait til my next court date so I can change my life around. I've already set some goals for myself. I will try to hook up wit a couple of my big homies or should I call them role models. I'm talking about two big homies that have changed their life around and now they come up here every Tuesday and help us get published in The Beat. The two big homies always talk positively to me telling that there's another way than this way I'm taking.

As soon as I get at my big homies as a matter of fact I don't even call them big homies because they treat me like a little brother and I appreciate that from them. Especially since my big brother got killed I need a positive role model.

-Lazy Boi

From The Beat: We know the two big brothers you're talking about, and if you set them as your role models, you will be traveling a completely different, one that includes finishing school and going to college, working to give back, and picking yourself up if you fall down. We know they will be touched to read this tribute to them (and to The Beat), and we appreciate it.

Refuse To Lose

I refuse to lose 'cause if you lose then you weak.

I refuse to lose and be a victim in these streets.

I refuse to lose and let the system run my life.

I refuse to lose and live wrong with my life,

I refuse to lose that's why I so fed up.

-Fed-Up Beam

From The Beat: We admire your determination not to lose, but what's missing here is your plan for winning.

Bay Life

This Bay life man is so incredible, scrapers, dreds, and a fresh pair of J's. Getting yo' grown man on consists of button downs and stunna shades. I live this life feel me and I does it real tycoon. If you don't know, now you know..

-Problem Child

From The Beat: Oh sure, now we know. You're a real tycoon. The kind that has someone telling you when to eat and sleep, when to talk and not, what to wear, etc. Open your eyes and smell the coffee.

Hard To Take A Loss

In my lifetime I've lost many homies in my 'hood, but the most devastating loss was my homey Meech who I grew up with. I was so used to seeing him on the block parked, his car slapping, that when he was shot and killed, I didn't know how to handle not seeing him hanging around being the true thug that we all loved.

My first reaction was to retaliate because the whole 'hood was at a loss and was missing his presence. At the funeral, everybody came to show love for my homey Meech. People came from many different sets. The message is it's not a game out here and when you or your homies are in the beef, they can be takin' at any time. Even though you miss them, you should be happy you have memories of good times and that the person you lost is in a better place now.

RIP big homey MEECH

-Young Lando

From The Beat: This is not only a fine tribute to Meech, it's much more. It's a timely and thoughtful warning about the dangers of the game that lead so many to tragic ends, and the need to resist the understandable temptation to take revenge.

I'm Real

I'm me V-guttah, knowin' to take you out quick if you disrespect me or my fam bam. Everybody like me for who I am, never a snake just a real ninja that keep it real to the fullest. Can't stop me fo' being me. Neva find a ninja like me and there's only one V-guttah under this boilin' sun and that's me. I'm the definition of real.

-V-Guttah

From The Beat: Can you really be "you" when you have to answer to strangers for when to get up, when and what to eat, what to wear, when to speak? If you want to be "real," you'd better find a way to keep yourself free and in control of your own life!

Revenge

For, y'all peoples out there
Man, think about your moves
And in what chu do
'Cause, man, it's hard to lose
Someone close to you a
Al you wanna do is take revenge
But think about it first
'Cause revenge is sweet but
NOT GREAT!

-Shadow

From The Beat: This is excellent advice, Shadow, and we hope you are able to follow it when you're feeling like taking revenge. We think the best revenge against this system is to succeed, to get your education, to move forward with your life and never come back to a place like this again. Now that's sweet revenge.

Afraid To Lose You

Only if I lost you mom
If this I was told
You fed me when I was hungry
Covered me up when I was cold
You made me strong
And bold in this world
Things not learned from a man
So I turned to a girl

-Yung LZ

From The Beat: So many mothers have to be both mother and father to their children these days. But you are lucky to have a mother who has been there for you. Now it's time for you to be there for her.

Without My Family And Friends

What I'm most afraid to lose is everyone in my family and friends, because without them, I'm lost, because without them, my faith, my love and my will to live...

-The Unknown

From The Beat: You didn't finish this piece about your fear of losing those you love. We're sure that they also fear losing you. Isn't there something you could do to reduce some of their worries, and therefore some of yours?

Down On Your Luck!

I been to jail two times. The first time was for some petty shhh. So I got out and a week later I was back in here for something serious this time. I feel like my luck's gone because I have no more faith in myself. Being in here just takes away my pride and joy! I don't think it's my fault because I didn't choose to live in the projects. I think that was a real mistake in my life. And I fell into the game, thinkin' my homies was there for me but they was fake.

-C-F B

From The Beat: You are right, you had no choice in where or how you were brought up, so we understand how easily it would be to fall into the traps that led you here. But at some point, we all become adult enough to look at how we were raised, to examine our belief systems as they were given to us, and to judge for ourselves what we want to believe and how we want to live. Luck is important, of course, but you will control much of that "luck" by the choices you make.

It's That Female, Giggles, For Those Who Don't Know

Down for my barrio
And, chea, I'm back, 'cause of some snitches
Man, that's the reason why I don't mess with
These weak-ass sistas
Tryna get off probation
My fam being the motivation
I'm taking steps to my next destination
So I can once again be free
Without no curfew or PO
I'm finna do me
So I can blaze some weed
I need to get out
Go back to the block
'Cause my trigger finger
Is needing its stock
Payback is a Grinch
So watch out, you snitch
You ain't gotta lie to kick it
Real recognize real
Someone called you out yo' name
You didn't do nothing
That's how I know you ain't real
Ha ha ha ha that's why they call me Giggles
'Cause I'm laughing at ya wannabees
When you really about yo' shhh
Come get back at me
Peace

-Giggles

From The Beat: You can laugh all you want, but when you finally open your eyes, you'll see that your laughing the laugh of a slave. And not just a slave, but one who volunteers to be a slave, who hands away her freedom to a system that tells her what to do and when to do it! No, you're not here because of a snitch, you're here because you did whatever the snitch said you did. If you had not done it, there'd be nothing to snitch about. Go ahead and laugh at those "wannabees" while you're wearing your county clothes, eating your county food, and waiting on your county officials to determine your future. When you wake up and grow up, then you'll begin to take control of your life. Until then, keep laughing...

Christmas Pass

I'm gettin' a home pass fa' today. I'ma be with the fam bam—moms, big sis. I'ma hit the block on da eve. I can't wait 'til I get ma pass. It's gone be sweet. I'ma get some girls, fa' sho'.

I'ma be stuck in here for ma birthday on 1/5/08. I ain't trippin'. I might get a pass fa dat, too. I missed Thanksgiving, but I ain't missin' Christmas. That's more important to me than anything right now. An' when I come back, it's gone look good in court, 'cause I didn't run.

-Guan

From The Beat: Good for you about not running. You're right. That will look good in court. We hope you start thinking that you don't need to miss Thanksgiving, Halloween or Christmas if you find a way to stay out of here.

Let's Make A Change

Life is crazy
But that's life
Lets all make a change
Why don't we?

-Eb

From The Beat: Good idea! How is your life crazy? What kind of changes would you like to see life in general or your own life make? When you're free again, how are you going to mold your life the way you want it?

It's How I Grew Up

The reason why I am the person I am today is because of who I hang with, the things I do and the way I carry myself. What impacts my life is the area I stay in because I grew up around a lot of drug dealers, killing and addicts. By me going through that made me want to do the same thing. By me being black, we get looked at a different way and the way we speak, the slang plays a big part in it too.

I have a personality that people hate and that make me be on the defense side, so I always get into it wit' people and that's why I am who I am.

-Ta Boom

From The Beat: Of course, we're all products of our upbringing — the values our parents teach us, the neighborhoods we grow up in, the schools we attend, what we see on the daily. But at a certain point, as we grow into adulthood, we are able to judge for ourselves what has been good in our lives and what has been bad. Hopefully, we are able to act as adults and make those choices that move our lives forward and don't keep us stuck in the past. You've described who you were, but not who you hope to be...

The Type Of Person I Am

Me, I'm a type of person who don't care about what people say or think about me. Who am I? I'm me; forget the bullshhh. I'm a type of person who hates liars, foo's dat think they sick when they're behind doors talkin' shhh. And when the door open, they ain't do shhh, ninjas dat mug or try to mug but don't do shhh. I'm a type of person who hates dat.

I'm also a type dat if you show respect I give respect. I'm really a family type of guy. If my family leaves me, I'll go crazy. I guess I'm a type dat cares about my family and homies and if you show dem any disrespect, I'll go bad on dem. Dat's who I am.

-Vago

From The Beat: We don't think you showed your family much respect by allowing yourself to be taken away from them! What kind of respect is that? In fact, how does it show respect to yourself to put your freedom on hold and allow a bunch of strangers to determine your future? No, the time to show how much you love your family is when you are with them by avoiding that kind of behavior that risks losing them. Words are nice, but it's actions that prove love.

16 Days To Freedom

Hopefully on Jan. 4 I will be out of here and on the plane to Philly. I can't wait to get out of here and be back in my own clothes and eat some real food.

Most importantly I can't wait to start this program so I can be really free. Hopefully I get out of there when I am done with high school. I am already a senior so I should touch down soon. To all the thugs, keep yo' head up. It's almost over.

-Beans

From The Beat: We wish you all the luck in Philly. If you want to get something out of the program, you will get something out of it! Yes, it's almost over, but if you don't change your act, it will just start all over again!

Afraid

I am afraid to lose my moms and dad because my mom and dad had took care of me good. I don't know what I would do, probably live with my sister because she is the oldest one in da family. I will be very disappointment. They have to go some time.

-Unknown

From The Beat: We hope your parents will be around for a long time, and that you will be around and free to help them.

Negative On Luck

One unfortunate time on my luck was when I went to court lately and the judge gave the ruling and said I was found guilty on count one, possession of a fire arm and count three, possession of a fire arm without guardian's permission.

The way I got to this point was I got stopped by the police on November 6 and they did not have no probable cause. I have a true feeling that was bad luck I had that night. Then after they found the gun, and they told me I was going to be detained. I was mad that the police just so happened to cross my path and decided to harass me, but then got lucky that I had a pistol.

Well Beat that's when I feel I was down on luck.

-Lil' Rob

From The Beat: Of course, if you did not have that pistol, it wouldn't matter that the cops decided to harass you. That's more than bad luck... that's bad thinking!

Me

Me, I'm truly never broke but a broke ninja thievin'
Ah will run in yo' house just to keep ma family eatin'

I'm a hustla for a livin'

Let me tell you how I'm livin'

No hugs, no kisses, use drugs, no children,
You could catch me wit' tha grimy type slidin' an' dippin'

When a girl get to know me, she be like:

"You different. you handsome, motivated young an'
gifted"

Ma young ninja trappin'

Really tryin' to make it happen

'Cause it's hard in da city, but let alone I'm black

Folks, it's broke ninjas thievin'

But yeah Beat, ah hope ya'll publish dis

Dat was a lil' bit about ma self

Peace out Beat, I'm out

-Na-Na-F-Holly

From The Beat: We had to take out one or two lines from this otherwise tight poem about your life. But we have to ask, if you have to resort to stealing to feed your family, who's putting food on the table for them now? Either they're starving to death, or you had other options which you didn't explore...

My Family Influenced M To Do Good In School

I am a young man that is just into my teen years. My family influenced me to do good in school and I would be a good basketball player like I am today. I train at night with a friend and shoot 100 shots every night, and run up and down the court. I am good at almost every class (in school.) I like learning about blowing up stuff in science.

-Jack Crazyfish

From The Beat: It sounds like you have a really good future ahead, if you can pinpoint the causes that brought you here and avoid them in the future.

Who Am I

Who am I? I'm a 18-year-old African-American male in the halls on juvenile probation.

Who am I? I'm a grown man who feels trapped but not for long!

Who am I? I'm a criminal and a menace to city so the judge says,

Who am I? I'm a man trying to succeed in life.

-G

From The Beat: We hope that when you say you aren't going to be trapped for long you are talking about the mindset that has trapped you here for too long. If the judge thinks of you as a menace, how do you think of yourself? We hope you're not planning to go back to doing the things that got you here because that road ends in county jail and state prison! Good luck.

Who I Am

I'm a black man, a real G. I live in the housing projects. I'm just a family man. I love to be with the fam bam and with the homies. I think I'm a good person and the realest ninja out there 'cause I don't mess with nothing and I don't trust no one. That who I am.

-Acie

From The Beat: When you love being with your family and with your homies, sometimes choosing between them is the difference between staying free and getting locked up! How will you make those difficult choices in the future?

Who Am I

I'ma boss on da outs. If you ask me what I'm about. I ain't go tell you, I'ma show you. I got money. I got toys. all da girls come through. We ah rock yo' world.

-Dre

From The Beat: You're not rocking any world where you are. What kind of a boss lets himself be taken by strangers, put in a cage and told what to do and when to do it? It's time to become a true boss and get control of your own life!

RIP Marcus AKA Sir

What's up wit' da Beat? Dis dat ninja Na Na F Holly holdin' it down for ma bras. But I'm in here prayin' every night askin' God why he had to take bra from tha block.

Marcus, we miss you bra, an' you know we gone ride off top, bra. We got to know how to survive, hustle, stand, fly. Da whole block cried when Marcus died. You know ah got to ride, neva let it slide. I'm gone be on da block getting money till ah die. Marcus bra, ah love you bra. Peace out.

-Na Na-F-Holly

From The Beat: We feel sorry for your loss, but do you honestly pray to God to ask why things are the way they are in your life? Isn't that kind of hypocritical? Are you doing what God had planned for you to do, living up to His laws? If not, then is it such a mystery why you and your homies are paying such a high price for disrespecting God? You say you'll be on the block getting money til the day you die, but everyone in the system who is making money off you is delighted with that decision. It just means they'll keep having a job...

Who Are You

E'rybody wanna be in charge

You could be the man witcha squad and live large

You jus' spend grand freak girls an' drive cars

I'ma rap star... Do you know who you are ninja?

I'ma thug an' I know what made me this way

I made myself this way but I had a lot of help from my loved ones

Somehow people that live the street life blame it on somebody else Whey always say that if their parents wouldn't be the way they is...

I think people who think that got the game twisted And that just goes to show that some ninjas don't know who they are

-Butta

From The Beat: But what does it mean that part of who you are is a prisoner, locked up in a tiny room and taking your orders from strangers? How does that figure into who you are and what you plan to be? Is there a way to be "who you are" and remain free?



I'm Still Young

I'm still young, so I still got a chance and I'm gonna change. I'm tryna get out and get my shhh straight and go to dis lil' program in Sonoma, so I can relax for a minute, Beat. Peace.

-Coo

From The Beat: We sure hope you follow your own excellent advice. There's nothing like living without having to look over your shoulder.

It Sucks To Be Back

Wassup Beat? It's been a long time since I been back. Well now its 'bout to be Xmas and I came back. That hella sucks but oh well.

I found out that my girl is pregnant one month. Damn! Hella shhh going on and I cant do anything 'bout it 'cause I'm here. But I'll be out soon. That's why am not trippin'. Since am here only for a violation, I'll be out quick and I'll go back home with an ankle monitor.

Well, it's always nice to come back to the place I spent my teenage years on. Yeah, I'm 'bout to turn 18 too, so I won't be comin' back.

-Smiley

From The Beat: No, you won't be coming back HERE, but we'd be a lot happier if you wrote that you won't be going to any lock-up anywhere. Of course, that's entirely up to you.

Send Me A Sign

I lay in my mat late at night lonely and cold thinking about when I'll be out. With tears in my eyes, tears of sadness, anger and hate, but what can I do about it? Nothing...right? The only option I have is to pray to God that I'll get out soon and back into my baby daddy's arms. That's what hurt me the most.

To think that I'm locked up in this horrible place with an angel in my stomach. That it's on its way to brighten my daddy's and also his father's, but the problem is that my baby's daddy doesn't know where I'm at. What if he thinks I want nothing to do with him and that I left him forever?

I pray to God to let me out soon and into his arms, at least one more time, to let him know why I was gone for so long, but also to stay out of trouble and obey the law, so I won't have to come back. The only thing that keeps me alive is the love I have for my own future family that I'll soon have of my own. So God give me faith, help me stay strong, don't let me fall at least not yet. Please God, I know you're listening to me, at least send me a sign that you're there. Thank you.

-Joanna

From The Beat: You want to get out to get back to your baby's daddy and you wonder if he's waiting for you. I would be more concerned about the baby you are about to have. If your baby's daddy is truly sincere, he'll be there. You look to get a sign, but you have already received it and don't seem to realize it. The baby... a new miracle. This could very well be the very sign you are looking for. A sign to turn your life in a new direction that will provide you with more opportunities and the freedom to make positive choices about the kind of life you will live and the life you will give to your child.

The Hole Inside

Out having fun all night long
I didn't care what I was doing was wrong
Trying to fill the hole in my heart
Running from problems, I tore myself apart
Now I'm just empty with nothing inside
The pain that I feel is getting harder to hide
I can't find a reason to get up each day
No one's left with me
I pushed them all away
So I just sit and let time pass me by
Avoiding my feelings by getting high

-Amethyst

From The Beat: Looking for love in all the wrong places...you are not going to find permanent happiness in people or things. You can't escape yourself by using drugs. Happiness will only come when you turn and face the monsters, pain, loneliness, emptiness. Look inside...find value in who you are and who you can and will eventually be. Everyday can be a step forward on life's journey to gaining more wisdom, accepting forgiveness and grace and loving and respecting oneself...towards peace.

Still Here

Why am I still here when I can be out there having fun? Here in Durango, you can't even look up to see the sun. Yup! It's sad being here, but I won't shed a tear 'cause now I'm kind of used to it, and that's just how I feel. That's how things go when there's nothing you can do, but take advantage of the things they give you here. That's why I can't see the sunshine because I made mistakes in life, such as commit a stupid crime, and now I feel so bad when I hear my momma cry.

-Marlene

From The Beat: Life is about consequences. We are told for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Your stupid crime is a cause, the effects are being locked up. The lesson is to learn from past mistakes. Many people have been in Durango and failed to acknowledge that they made a stupid mistake. We all will continue to make mistakes the rest of our lives. We are growing when we learn from our mistakes. We encourage you not to be so hard on yourself. When we stop making mistakes we will be among the celestial. The human being is a work in progress. Durango is like putting your life on pause, it gives you time to reflect and make better choices.

My Time Capsule

If I were to make a time capsule I would put the most important things that mean a lot to me. Then I would lock it very secure and bury it some where were I would be able to dig it back up fifteen to twenty years from now and look at them.

The first thing I would put in my time capsule would first be a picture of my family like my mom, Nana, brother, my dog, and my God Son. The reason why is because they mean the most to me in life, they are always there for me and never let me down and the picture will remind me of them in case they aren't here anymore with me.

The second thing I would put in the capsule would be my Nana's food recipes because her food is the best and it shows me how lucky I 'am to have someone in my life who loves me and never let's me go a day with out hunger like some unfortunate kid's out there in the world. Those are the only things I would have in my time capsule and to me those things mean love, happiness, family, and the meaning of life to me.

I also would put things that belong to me and represent me, like my Nike Cortez's, low-rider clothing and a shaver that I use to shave my head. I also would put a football and soccer ball in the capsule because those are my favorite sports to play. I also would put my Favorite music and artists inside the time capsule too.

-Alex

From The Beat: Time capsules are to let future generations know what we were doing and what was important to us. 1)The family as you stated is our #1 priority. It's very important we remember our base, because that is what we stand on. 2)Food like music can mentally take us to places of pleasure, thus happy food. 3)Do you think the kids of the future generation, say 50 years from now, will think you're old fashioned, like we thought of our parents? Again, we hope your family is number one and not the foolish lifestyle you lead.

BabyBoy

You are my everything...my one true love.
That's why I ask the Lord from the heavens above
to guide and protect you all through the night
and I hope that you will soon see the light.
I will always love you,
no matter what you do.
When I first came here I wanted to give up, throw it all
away,
then I sat down and thought about it.
Look at all we've been through. I couldn't just throw it
all away.
You did me wrong
but I know I'm strong.
You broke my heart and tore it to shreds,
but I've learned to forget and forgive.
So, if it's meant to be...it will be.
Let God do what He do.
I hope you know that I still love you.
That will never change.
When I get out, I'll write you everyday,
because I will never forget the promises that we've made.
I'll pray for you every night and day.
I ask God to send you my love and joy.
Stay strong baby boy.
Remember time only makes our love stronger.

-Kandy (Jessica)

From The Beat: You sound like you have made a commitment, however, you mention he did you wrong. In love, trust and loyalty make up the cement which bonds the relationship. One must be sure someone else's commitment is as strong as theirs in order for it to work. Too often, as relationships progress, both parties express "this is not what I thought it was going to be". Communication is very important. Sincerity, loyalty, truthfulness, commitment, fidelity, love all these are needed to commit to a relationship.

Look Into My Eyes

When people look into my eyes I wonder what people
see
Do they see a strong, happy, intelligent young lady
Or do they see that painful young girl who lays within
me?
I don't know, 'cause when I look into my eyes, I see both
features
When I also look into my eyes, I see a person who is
wise
I am very strong. If I wasn't, I will just give up
But instead, I'm on a whole new chapter
I plan to set better choices for my future
When I look into my eyes, I see a person who's capable
in doin' anything she put her mind to do
So what I'ma do, I'ma step ma education game up
But instead of all dat posted on da block, I'm through
I'm on big and better thangs. I'm on somethin' new
I'm getting too old to be acting like a lil'-ass kid
I'm not trying to be one of the ones to be an adult
And be talkin' about what I shoulda an' coulda did
I'ma switch ma life around, not even think twice
You will see a strong-hearted person if you look into my
eyes
I'm tired of playing games wit' myself
'Cause all I'm doin' is wastin' my own life

-Karen

From The Beat: You gave us about ten different pieces (too many!), but all of them are good ones. We definitely believe you're on a new path, and one that will not lead you to lock-up but to college and beyond. Forget what anyone else says or does, and just follow what you know! We'd love to hear from you on the outs about how you're doing.

Roller Coaster

My life is a roller coaster
I can feel myself gettin' high and low
I'm in my own world
Lost in a dream, all alone
I have nobody to trip off of, only myself
I doubt there is anybody in dis world
Who has been through da pain I've felt
I wanta change and I will—it's just gonna take time
So instead of slackin', I need to get myself together
I can and I will, I just gotta take it slow
Like a knock goin' to rehab, I'm gonna get better
People can doubt me, but I already know
I'ma get through my problems, we been stuck on for
years
I have God by my side, so I have nothin' to fear
I wanta bring myself higher, so I won't have to shed so
much tears
My eyes are opening up slow; my future is becoming
more clear
One day I will get to my destiny, and people will see
I may have my struggles now, but one day I will be free
Free from haters, free from downfalls and pain
I will become as bright as rainbows shining above the
rain

-Karen

From The Beat: Now this is what we're talking about, a piece that puts the focus where it belongs, on yourself! We appreciate the fact that you are facing your future with a very positive outlook, aiming to walk a different path. That is the important thing. That feeling you have that nobody could have experienced the pain you've gone through is what everyone feels who goes through some of the things you've gone through, so it's not very useful to compare your pain to that of others. They must deal with theirs as you must deal with yours. It sounds like that's exactly what you are doing, and that can only help you to shine.

Drifting On A Memory

Wishing this wasn't true
Too young to know what to do
Screaming and crying
Wondering if I'm dying
As a familiar face
Invades my space
Forcing his way inside
'Causing me to bleed between my thighs
'Cause mom didn't come home that night
This isn't right
"Mama, why'd you leave me with him alone?
Why didn't you come home?"
Tears falling, as I cry out in pain and fear
The memory's still so clear
Haunting my every thought
'Causing me to abandon what I was taught
About family values and trust
Raped as a child
Because of a man's demented lust
I cried and screamed
And still do in my dreams
No one attempted to save me
Or even come to my aid
I know the neighbors heard me
But that night I was never saved
Not even by God as I prayed
A child, so mild
Yet that night became defiled
Who knew mama's man was a pedophile?
She's still in denial all the while
I never could bring myself to tell her
But deep down she knows
The regret on her face shows
But still she refuses to let him go

-Friskie

From The Beat: The statute of limitations has undoubtedly run out on this crime, Friskie, but that doesn't make it any less a crime! We have seen the denial that wives and lovers go through when their boyfriends molest their children, and we find it difficult to have sympathy for your mother (sorry). (Maybe you should contact the Dr. Phil show, and see if you, your mother and her boyfriend can all get on. That way, you could say what you know and see how she and he try to deal with it. It wouldn't change the past, but it might make you feel better in the present.)

Our Privacy Gets Violated

Subject to search and seizure
Our privacy gets violated at their leisure
Whatever happened to gender sensitivity?
You gotta be kidding me
A man can go in a girl's room
Bringing back memories full of gloom
He may have a badge
But he's still touching her sheets
Where she lays and sleeps
Touching the comb that goes through her hair
He may be a staff
But his presence still lingers in the air
He may not be the one who abused me or used me
But he invaded my hold space
My sanctuary and safe place
Am I the only one who sees
Something wrong
With what is going on?

-Friskie

From The Beat: Though you are describing something sinister (at least to you), some of the phrases you use could just as well be describing an act of love: "Touching the comb that goes through her hair..." Maybe because of that ambiguity, it actually conveys the unseemliness of what you describe. Another humiliation endured... and another remarkable achievement!

Trying To Understand My Life

Crazy thoughts soon fill my head
 As I look ahead
 Things seem cool
 But they really getting worse
 I'm trying to make it further
 It's been hard growing up without a father
 All these years I been pretending it didn't matter
 Situation is critical
 Got me all confused
 I'm trapped
 Dat's one of da reasons
 I feel da need to stay strapped
 Never know who will try to take my life
 Living my life like a dice game
 But who's to blame?
 Evil an' good flowing through my mind
 Trying to get away
 But dis pain won't go away
 It's stuck deep inside
 All alone, nobody by my side
 Lost in my thoughts
 Dat someone asks to buy
 An' sell to da public
 Like da life I live is a story to tell
 Worried about what's coming next
 Not knowing my next move
 Will I make it one more day in da 'hood?
 I shed too many tears, lost too much blood
 An' what have I gained?
 Being locked up behind bars
 Looking at four walls
 Thinking once again I took a fall
 Falling victim to da system
 Temptation wanting me to do crime after crime
 Satan knowing I'm smart
 Making me feel I'm drifting apart
 From da Man up above
 Looking for love an' happiness
 Is all I ever wished upon
 But instead I been given free
 "Spare my life" coupons
 My life is too scandalous
 To comprehend

-Giggles

From The Beat: You already know so much about your life and about what you should do (and not do), that we find it difficult to say anything new. Yes, you have gone through experiences that might have left others behind. Yes, the pain you carry is real and the friends you've lost will never come back. But that is not a reason to stop where you are. Many people with very similar and tragic backgrounds have found the inner strength to overcome their pasts and to work for a better future, both for themselves and for their communities. You have the potential to be such a person, but you must take your life firmly in your own hands and have the courage to say to your homies the most difficult word in the English language: "No!"

*I shed too many tears,
 lost too much blood
 An' what have I gained?
 Being locked up behind bars
 Looking at four walls
 Thinking once again I took a fall*

Time To Move On

Time to move on from this life, doing what I want to do, acting a fool
 Trying to act grown, thinking I could survive the game on my own
 I want to move on and move past the game
 But it's so addicting to me, like it has a chain
 I don't even do drugs and I know this addicting pain
 The game is really no joke
 I've been in it to win it since twelve years old
 I think I should know
 These girls in here think they've really been in the game
 If they really knew 'bout it
 They wouldn't be talking like it's all fun and games
 Like it a good thing to be on the block
 The game is not it
 Putting bundles inside of you
 And you know they don't fit
 Trying to look cute, but you know it's hurting like hell inside of you
 The game is nothing nice
 It's been too many times where the game almost took my life
 I just thank God that he let me survive that life
 Time to move on
 The game has separated me and my family
 'Cause I wanted to be in the game
 But they just wasn't having it
 People might think it's all good when you start
 But if you was really getting money
 You would be shining and you would realize that you ain't becoming nothing
 But the feds forget and that ain't nothin' cool, for real
 Time to move on
 I don't know why I begun the game in the first place
 My mom and dad gave me everything I wanted, except my way
 I have pictures in my head
 When I would tell ninjas that I can't talk to you
 'Cause I'm married to the game already
 And when I would tell people I'm getting Fs in school
 But As on the streets
 Now I just laugh
 Think how stupid I sounded
 I don't know why people want to be in the game
 Turning around every time somebody say, "Black and white"
 Or "Blue Ghost"
 And always watching your back for undercovers
 The game is a big board game with a road
 And when it's time for you to end the game
 It's already the end of the road
 The game — I'm so tired of it
 If you name it, I've been there
 The only part of the game I haven't accomplished was death
 And I'm glad I didn't
 I'm just glad I realized that it's time to move on
 And just wish others will realize too, before it's too late
 Females wanna act like they really in the game
 And really know about it
 And really be on the block and shhh
 But all I got to say to them is
 Stop acting or you really wanna see what it's all about
 Then go get in it and I hope you make it out
 So go by experience and not what you heard
 So you know it's Nienie Babie
 I'm conceited; I got a reason!

-Nienie Babie

From The Beat: If you mean you've got a reason to be conceited because you've figured out what it means to be an adult, then we agree! Whatever anyone else does (and we hope they do like you), it always encourages us to find someone whose child's eyes have opened to see the world from a grown-up point of view. We're interested in how this transformation came about — something someone said, getting tired of giving your freedom away, watching your mom cry when you get locked up, or just natural growing up. But however it came about, we think you're new way of thinking will take you far from here and into a life that will let you look back in gratitude that you passed through this dark period into the light. Good for you!

Love Is Pleasant But Blind

Love is pleasant but it is blind
 This boy I once knew,
 He had me so confused
 So let me share dis story wit' y'all
 Let me rewind,
 And bring back dis time...
 Dis boy I once knew,
 His name was Dee
 And he was from Oakland
 I never left his side
 He never left mine
 We stuck by each other all da time
 We did all types of romantic things
 That any other couple would
 When we was in bed,
 Best believe it was good
 One day, dough, me and him
 Haven't seen each other all day
 No text, phone calls, nothin'
 Somethin' bad kept crossin' ma mind
 And I knew I wasn't trippin'
 It had to be somethin'
 So around 2:30 in da morning
 I get a call from his right hand
 I say, "Yeah, what's up?"
 He say, "Ya man got shot
 He up at Highland (a hospital)
 So I drop da phone 'cause I didn't undastand
 So I hop in ma car and went to go see what was up wit' ma
 man
 So I halla at da nurse,
 She send me to his room
 When I open the room
 I see two police officers by his side
 They ask me who I was... I said, "His wife"
 So they say they need to talk to me outside
 They tell me dis bullshhh
 Sayin' ma dude in custody
 For being a part of a robbery case
 My words wouldn't come out
 When I wanted to curse them out
 But I'm pretty sure
 They had read the impression on ma face
 But anyways, to make a long story short
 My dude get locked up
 And had to do 'bout two years
 But I always stayed faithful
 And stood by his side
 Bein' as solid as I can
 Every day I will make sure
 He got pictures and mail
 Every other day
 He will get a visit from me
 As his right hand man
 I always kept money on his books
 Sent him shoes, clothes, food
 I even sent him some candy toward his way when I can
 Stay updated wit' his lawyer 'bout his case
 I went to all his court dates, all dat shhh

When he got released, I got 'im a cool lil' spot to lay
 his head at
 Hooked him up wit' a job where ma big bra do business at
 And got 'im a nice lil' whip
 I went all out for dis ninja

One day I go to our crib
 I swear I thought I was dreamin'
 When I saw dis ninja messin' with dis chick in our bed
 At dat very moment I was stuck
 It was so much shhh goin' through ma head
 So instead of beatin' da girl's ass, I left instead
 "Handle ya business—hit me when you done"
 Was the only words I said
 One hour later
 I get a call from Dee
 I answe da phone
 Told 'im to pack his shhh
 And for 'im to leave da house keys, but to keep da car,
 And hung up in his face
 Four hours later I drove up to ma spot,
 And I see this ninja' car
 As soon as I walk through da door,
 Dis ninja all in ma face
 Sayin' "sorry" this, "sorry" that
 How he love me
 And how can't no otha take my place
 I love 'im too
 Dat is why I stood by dis ninja' side
 But he broke my heart
 And I couldn't let that go
 So I told dis ninja,
 If he had the respect for me,
 He would leave
 So he did what I said
 The last word I got to stay to him was
 "If you need anything
 I'ma always be here foe you"

Well, it's been one year now since I last seen 'im
 And I think 'bout him all the time
 He was my first love
 And I still can't believe he did me wrong
 Love is pain, but it is also blind
 And one thing I wanta know is
 Why do guys do da shhh they do
 And always complainin'
 Of wanting a real chick by they side
 And when they get one,
 They don't know what to do?

-Karen

From The Beat: Even though we know some men who say they have always been faithful to their beloved, experience tells us that such men are truly rare. We can't answer your question about why men who have found what they claim they are looking for risk it all for a role in the hay with someone else. And we're not even sure that the men who cheat this way know why they do it either. In any case, we admire you so much for respecting yourself and making that very difficult decision to cut him loose for treating you the way you did. (The one thing we don't understand is why, when you found him with another girl, you wanted to beat her ass but not his?) You'll probably be a little less likely to believe whatever men tell you, but that caution is probably a good thing. Thank you for writing this epic poem of love and loss. Unfortunately, this "story" is all too familiar.

*Well, it's been one year now since I last seen 'im
 And I think 'bout him all the time*

Chaos

My words are from the heart
 There's no end
 And I don't want to be your friend
 I just want you to listen
 To the story of my life
 Because the fine print in my strife
 Will change your insight of this place
 Because right now you're head's up in space
 Thinking nothing could touch your body or face
 It's time to replace your take on the game
 You believe it's the way to get your name
 Into the flow of pay, but it will only cause pain
 Believe these people you meet will not hesitate to
 deceive
 But only prolong the process of your suffer
 And cause the upper hand to stand in your way
 As the man you are
 But can't somehow seem to understand
 You fight for the right to survive and be free
 But you continue with your deed that proceeds you to jail
 And you still fail to realize
 The lies of insanity of these people
 And you simply fall through the cracks of the back alley
 With the lack of a mindset to know what's really going
 on
 You think you're growing strong
 But your thoughts are getting weaker
 With your conscience no longer a speaker in this life
 you lead
 As you continue to reap what you sew, but you don't
 know
 That the hurt you caused along your road will come
 back around
 To cause you hurt
 You'll have to stay alert
 Watching out behind you 'cause karma will
 Catch you blind, catch you slippin'
 Then you'll be trippin'
 Trying to get out of the life you're currently livin'
 And would give anything to be free of the pain
 You're excruciatingly bound in
 To really win, you need to give it up
 Turn around and right your wrongs
 You don't have long, you need to be strong
 Go against the grain
 Find something real to gain
 'Cause these thugs and hustlers
 Are going nowhere in the game
 But jail or six feet under
 And you wonder why I tell you this
 It's not the life to really gain honor or pride
 And if you die
 No one will remember your name
 Or who you were
 So instead you need to strive
 To do right and stay alive in your life
 In this world of chaos

-Kayos

From The Beat: You bring both the power of thought and the power of words together in this fine poem. What we don't know is whether this understanding of the game and your role in the world is something you've always felt and known, or something you've only realized in recent times. If that's the case, we're truly interested to know what influences in your life (or, maybe nothing more than the maturity that comes with years) helped promote this change in you. How will these insights guide you on the outs? How will your life be different, both in the short and the long run? That would make an interesting piece for us to read.

Caught In A Trap

Guns going off is all I hear
 Thoughts of me losing another brings me a tear
 I don't live in fear
 Just mad at the world
 For being so caught up
 Day by day the murder rates increase
 An' da homies decrease
 An' become deceased
 Young girls catching all kind of disease
 (Use a rubber, at least)
 Innocent people getting shot down by crooked cops
 Losing all their homies an' dreams
 Lil' boys selling cream
 Just to be on da team
 Dope fiends overdosing
 Doors keep closing
 Our lives we keep losing
 But who is dis game fooling?
 Girls getting raped
 Falling in da trap
 An' den it's a wrap
 Homies getting locked up
 Girls dat shouldn't, getting knocked up
 Sentenced to doing life behind bars
 Now you in a 4x4
 Wishing you could look at da stars
 Knowing your future has been taken
 Ya just need to stop fakin'
 Acting like it's funny
 You getting your ass beat
 Your man making your face fluffy
 Now people want to cop heat
 Da enemy they want to defeat
 Is either you or them
 Six feet under
 An' you still wonder
 While I still ponder
 Should I speak a little louder?
 Society is all jacked up
 Got me living life messed up
 My life is like a nightmare
 Do you dare to enter?
 Smoking blunt after blunt
 Trying to escape
 An' live life cool
 An' not like a fool
 I hate seeing people I love
 Lost in da streets
 Not giving a damn
 If they feed their kid
 I got homegirls struggling to get by
 Section 8, trying to survive
 As these wannabe thugs
 Trying to do it live
 Poor kids growing up to be nobodies
 It's not a game
 It's a way of life
 Dat I'm trying to find a way out
 But can't yet

-Giggles

From The Beat: When we read a poem like this — as close to a masterpiece as we've seen — we consider how different your life would have been had you been born into wealth and opportunity. We have no doubt that you could achieve anything you chose, from famous poet and writer to a justice on the Supreme Court if that's what you wanted. And so we see a double tragedy. As fine as your brain is, and as much as you (sometimes) want it to, your fine brain is not up to the task of figuring a way back out of the maze your life has been. We wish there were some magic pill we could give you, but no pill is magic, and in reality, only hard decisions, tremendous courage and a decent amount of luck can change your course. Which brings us to that second tragedy... It is that, unless that difficult change of course takes place, we (the rest of us) will forever be cheated out of what you might have done (and yet can still do), from finding a cure to cancer to becoming a first-grade teacher of children desperate for first-class role models.

Showing My Mom I Love Her

The person who I am most afraid to lose is my mother. The reason why I am afraid to lose my mother is because she is the person who has been there for me my whole life, and she is the only one who is there for me now. My mother has done a lot for me. Even when she really can't do something for me, she does whatever she can to get whatever I need. She is a single parent who is raising three children, including me, and she works hard just to keep a roof over our heads and food in our mouths.

I be feelin' like I have not showed her all my love that I got for her, and if I lose her, I would just say screw the world and start doin' lots of dumb stuff, even if I know what the consequences are.

The first time I got locked up, I was only in here for two weeks. But in those few days, my mother was shot three times, and I was on a tear, tryna find out who it was. But, anyways, I would have not known what I would have done if I was to come out to find out my mom was gone. Me and my mom are close and we could pretty much talk about anything.

It would be bad if I lose her. When I get out I'm going to show her how much I love her.

-Lil' Chucho

From The Beat: We want you to try to put yourself in her shoes for a minute. If you fear losing your mother (and threaten to go on one if you do), how do you think she must think about losing you? Even though we believe you love her very much, are you showing her love by putting yourself in the line of fire? When you give the system the power to take you from her, aren't you saying that whatever it was that got you here is something you love even more than her? If that's not the case, can you stop doing it for her sake?

Lonely Girls

Lonely young girl growing up so fast
So many hurt feelings she holds inside
She spent so many years hidden behind a mask
She wants so much help, but she doesn't know how to ask
But she has been through so much pain
That she still holds from the past
That it's so hard for her to move on
She always longed for a father figure
But so many years he's been gone
So she tries so hard to stay strong

-Princess

From The Beat: RecOGMizing that you need help is the start of getting it. Even by writing it, you are asking for help, and that is a good thing. We can understand your longing for a father, but we urge you to find a support group of people who have similar longings for an absent father or mother. We think if you look for those supporting people and programs, you will find them.

Where I'm From

When I die, don't nobody cry for me
If I reach my last breath, it was meant to be
If tonight is my night, then so be it
I just hope it ends quick
Because I don't want the pain to stick
I'm not saying that I'm scared
To look death in its eyes
I'm just saying if I'm going
Then I'm going by surprise
If you wanna kill me
Just shoot for my head
All it takes is one shot
For my ass to be dead
I'm not saying that I'm scared
I just don't wanna suffer
Sometimes I think breathing
Makes life tougher
Staying on the same road
Homie, it gets rougher
Somebody please tell my motha
That I love her
In this life of crime
I put my life on the line
For all those times
I can hear it in my mind
Saying over and over again
Everything comes to an end
Where I'm from
Most soldiers die when they're young
'Cause these streets don't take kindly to anyone
Your mother, your father, your daughter or your son
We all fall victims to the bullet of a gun

-Shy Boy

From The Beat: Do you believe that your future is already told?/That you have no choices in how things unfold?/Do you think words of love can comfort a mother/When her son is shot by — or shoots — a brother?/If you choose not to live your life by the jungle's laws/Don't you increase the chance that you'll die from a natural cause?/We wonder how much of your certainties would be undone/If you were a father as well as a son...

Living In The Streets

Living on the streets of East Palo Alto ain't as easy as it seems, 'specially as a Cholo. You can't walk through a street without being asked what they bang. Even when you don't, you have to join the opposite gang for protection. So that's how I joined a gang, because I needed protection and quick. And now, when you want to get out or not get involved, it's hard, because they know you everywhere. So you can't walk by yourself; you need protection from the other side.

And now people respect me. Since I got in a gang, every time somebody hits me up, they have to get a lot of people just to get me. So now they know about where I'm from and how I get down, but I know now there is no way back, 'cause once you join a gang, you can't go back. You got to walk without fear and with pride of what you represent, or they think you are scared or you don't put your shhh down. So now there is nothing I can do but put in work for my town without regretting what I do and without looking back and have no emotions.

-Parka

From The Beat: You are so wrong! We know you are wrong because we have too many friends who were in much deeper than you can imagine (deep from within the gang structure at Pelican Bay, for example), who have had their eyes opened, and who now serve a different cause which is as far from banging as you can get. So, if you choose to continue to do what you think gives you respect (and which any adult would see is a path to losing your freedom or your life), don't pretend that it's because you "can't go back." If others can, why can't you? We think it's time for you to own up to your own responsibilities for the choices you make. We hope you realize the truth of this before you find yourself enslaved for decades or worse.

Pray Now, Pay Later

One day in the Central Valley
Living in juvenile hall with my homies in the Cali
I came here for probation violations
But when I got here, I got in a lot of difficult situations
They call me Goofy 'cause I always goof around
But don't ever mess around with my hometown
'Cause you don't wanna mess with these criminals
Every day, before I go to sleep, I kneel to the Lord, saying, "Please...
Save me from my sins 'cause one day I want to go to heaven to fly with you with my wings"
Every day that I live, I live it like it was my last
Because tomorrow is not promised before you get blasted
But the police say that I'm a gangster and what I do is illegal
So they're trying to take mi amigo,
But here's a story when I was a chavalio,
Gangbanging for reals, always causin' lios
And also camaradas always die
And their mothers always cry
So you better keep trucha (strong)
Living in this gangster world

-Goofy

From The Beat: While you pray to the Lord so that you won't be hurt/ You continue to brag about doing your dirt/Do you think the Lord is fooled by the things you TELL/Or, will the things you DO cause you to spend eternity in Hell/Communication with God is not a one-way street from you to Him/If you continue to ignore His words to you, your chances for Heaven grow ever more slim/As long as you keep reppin' a street, a town — a piece of sod/There is no way in Heaven you can be reppin' God

My Hate Hurts Those I Love

The persons I'm afraid to lose is my mom and my sister. I'm afraid to lose them because they are the only two people that I care about. They understand what I go through and how I feel. My dad punked out on us and left to go with this female. My mom and my sister cried for him. I didn't. The hate I had for him, I used it in a negative way.

I started messin' up in school, gettin' in trouble with the cops. I ended up on probation. I tried to let my hate go, but the more I tried, the more I hated him. My mom was the only person who knew how I felt. She's gettin' old and getting pains on her body. I tried to convince her not to work that much, but now that I'm in here, I know she might pass away. Really, I don't want that to happen to her. She has had too much of my shhh, just so she can die 'cause of me.

My sister, she's kinda like my best friend. I can tell her anything, but she has asthma and most of the time I tell her to take her inhaler. I really don't care what happens to me as long as my mom and sister are safe and sound. I'm okay with that.

-Luis

From The Beat: Do you find it interesting that, even though you hated your father, the actions you took to express that hate only hurt yourself, your mom and your sister, the very people you say you love! Is it enough to say you love someone if, by your actions, you cause them pain? As long as you "don't care what happens" to you, then you really can't care what happens to them since what happens to you affects what happens to them. You're so lucky to have a mother and a sister that you love and that love you. It's time to show your love by your deeds. The gift you have within your power to give them is not diamonds or a new house; it's you, free and safe. Can you give them that?

Places I've Been

Places I've been—in and out of jail, been to both halls
 Graduated units by age, from purple, to yellow, to green
 Been to Camp Glenwood, then back to the hall
 Gone to Bridges' Gang Rehabilitation group home, then again back to the hall
 I've done a lot of time, even went to ROP (Rites Of Passage)
 Did some time there, then I escaped back to tha hall
 Coming here before my teen years
 Damn, can't wait to get out

-Speedy

From The Beat: We find it interesting that, even while saying you can't wait to get out, you say you "escaped" back to the hall. Is the hall better than ROP? If you've been back so many times (here and other programs), then we have to start asking whether you can't wait to get out, or you can't wait to get back in...

Haters

I'm tired of haters always up in ma face
 Always on every move I'm on, on a quick paste
 Tryna knock me on my riches
 Haters are just like snitches
 If they ain't got what you got
 Haters gone talk
 Hater always on every block
 Tryna knock people on what they do
 It seems like a hater is in everybody
 'Cause people always got somethin' to say
 But they play their own part
 Like each person has a role in the play
 Haters talk, 'cause they can't take care of they own business
 Last hater I knew had to get 200 stitches, all in they mouth
 They ain't 'bout nothin', bein' fake is what they all about
 It ain't nothin' new
 But I ain't trippin off no haters
 They can do what they do
 Regardless, off top, I'ma always be me
 Bein' real, bein' solid, talkin' care of business like a lady
 I'ma be real to me as I do to others
 I'm not sayin' everybody is fake
 'Cause you can't never
 Judge a book by its cover
 I'm always solo forevera on da unda
 I just worry 'bout me
 All dat unnecessary drama goin' on
 I'ma let dat shhh be

-Princess

From The Beat: We like the end of your poem much better than the beginning. After spending so much time telling us what haters have coming to them, you end by saying you're not tripping and you're going to let it be. Good advice!

No Frown

I'm all spooked out, suicidal in my mind
 Locked up here in my room, just sitting, doing time
 Reminiscing up on my past, looking up, up at the walls
 Got my hands behind my back as I'm walking through these halls
 My head is steady spinning, in my mind I'm always winning
 Even though I'm here, locked down. On my face I wear a frown

-Spooky

From The Beat: We're sure you've heard the old saying that "suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem." Don't make the mistake of thinking that the snapshot of your life that is today will look the same forever. Everything changes, if we can wait... and do some things to bring about the change.

Haters

Havin' hatas hate
 Ain't a problem to a boss!
 While the hatas hate
 They just doin' me a favor...
 Havin' ma name in dey mouth
 Might seem to be bad...
 But they lettin' others know who I am
 Fed
 Dey just makin' me famous!
 I ain't walkin' da royal carpet
 I be walkin' on dat white toilet paper
 Because I'm da shhh
 So all I gotta say is
 Dat I love ma hatas
 Ya dig?

-Melino

From The Beat: Do you love yourself? We ask that because you've given up your freedom to a cold system, so we're wondering if you're hating on yourself (and then loving yourself for being a hater...)

Loss Of A Role Model

I lost my cousin as a role model. In about '03, he started drinkin' and smokin' and then, eventually, his football career started goin' downhill. He was hangin' around the wrong people. But I don't necessarily blame his actions for mines, because I made the decision to start bustin' guns, sellin' dope, and all that.

But since I've been locked up and sat down for a minute, it makes me think this ain't the life to live. It's a cycle coming back and forward. You have to get that number off of you, make the right decision.

-Jay-Jay

From The Beat: We hope the fact that this time has given you a chance to think about your life and what you want from it will move you into a different path. If you lost your cousin as a role model, do you imagine there are some people who have looked to you as a role model and feel disappointed by the choices you've made? Those choices are past; it's the choices you make from this moment forward that count. Don't disappoint those who look up to you.

So Far From The City

I remember one Saturday morning I woke up and went to get some food. Then I came back in bed. I was in a mood. My brother and cousin woke and I asked them, "Do you wanna go to the city?" Then they said, "Yeah," so we got dressed and left the house.

When we got to my neighborhood, it was nobody there. Then we met these girls and went to their house. Then, right after that, my friend called and said, "Where you at?" I told him I was on my way, so then we left the girl's house.

That same minute my mom called. She said, "Come, I need you to do something."

We came home and stayed there for a couple of hours, all the way until night. We was really mad, and we left the house after she said, "It's okay." But the bus stopped running, so we couldn't get back out there. So we stole a car, got caught, and now I'm talkin' about it right now.

-Reese

From The Beat: Have you and your friends ever considered that the consequences might not be worth the risk? Not to mention how you would react if someone stole your mom's car.

Let Your Voice Be Heard

People dream
 People cry
 People live
 People die
 Some are honest
 But many lie
 And many suppress
 What they feel inside
 Because of pride
 People love
 People hate
 Some have patience
 Others can't wait
 You can't change your fate
 But you can change a life
 It's up to you to do wrong
 Or start living right
 People hope
 People pray
 Many will die
 And won't live to see another day
 Others are lost
 And will never find their way
 People are complex creatures
 With a variety of emotions and features
 Some are dense
 While others are deeper
 Some are strong
 Some are weak
 Some are flamboyant
 While others are meek
 Diversity can be found
 All around
 Wherever you turn
 There's something to learn
 Something to reach
 Something to teach
 So don't ever take for granted
 Your right to freedom of speech
 Let your thoughts be heard
 In the classroom
 Or when you speak
 Stand up for your beliefs
 Never accept defeat
 Let your voice be heard
 In the pages of The Beat

-Friskie

From The Beat: You may very well be out by the time this issue goes to print, but you have always let your voice be heard (at least in this publication), and we are grateful. Don't be a stranger on the outs.

Health-O-Holics

When you exercise, you can thrive.
When you exercise, you feel alive.
In the pool, we swim and dive.
If you have a chance to walk, please don't drive.

Health-o-holics
Feels so good
When you exercise
When you exercise
It feels good

All those cigarettes are such a threat.
Too much alcohol will make you sweat.
Don't do drugs—they'll put you in debt.
Too much of anything will make you upset.

Health-o-holics
Feels so good
When you exercise
When you exercise
It feels so good.

When you eat y our fruit you can thrive.
Eat a balanced meal—you feel alive
Not so many sweets—a little more meat.
Too much fats and oils in our treats.

Health-o-holics
Feels so good
When you exercise
When you exercise
It feels so good.

-Brandon

From The Beat: You should be writing commercials for the health industry!

Thinking

The last 120 days I've been living in misery. I was sitting in jail while my son was missing me. Took the rap for my brother and he still hasn't wrote me. I think to myself, "What kind of love is that?" but he was my brother/best friend. That's why I took the rap. Now I just feel like he just turned his back on. And now I think about it, I turned my back to not only my brother but on my son. Four months away from him over something dumb, something I really didn't do, so I still think to myself, "What did I do?"

-Justin

From The Beat: Some lessons are learned only after paying a heavy price. You've learned a truly valuable lesson, that your obligation and future lie in your son, and that's who you should be thinking of first. When you get out from under this situation, you will have your priorities in order, and that's something to be grateful for.

Vision-Reality-Advice

Sometimes it takes for someone to get locked up to realize that they're heading down the wrong path. You're afraid of your own self, because of what everybody else thinks. Be true to yourself and don't fret, because when you get angry, you do things without thinking, and it only makes it worse on yourself and family members. Do the right thing and get out, and if you're not getting out, try to give the wisdom to people who will be free someday.

-Jay-Jay

From The Beat: What excellent advice, Jay-Jay. Has this cold bucket of ice called juvenile hall opened your eyes? What changes do you foresee coming into your life?

Who Are You?

Who am I? Let me start off by telling you what the system tells me about myself. They say I'm a menace to society. They say I'm a no-good, dumb-ass kid. They say that because of my actions and the things I have done. They say I'm a gang member on the road to dying, but they don't know me.

When I had no one, my homies came to me. When I need protection, the homies got my back. They are willing to do things that others are scared to do. I joined the gang because I needed someone to help me. My life's been tough, but it's only gonna get tougher, and when that happens, I'm gonna need someone. So before you try to tell me what type of person you think I am, let me tell you who I really am.

-Smokey

From The Beat: To be honest, we can understand exactly why you chose the protection and "love" of your homies when you needed it. We think it's a tragic comment on the country we live in that you are forced to find safety in activity that can so easily lead to your death, life in a wheelchair, or what you are facing now, a bunch of strangers with total control over your life. The gang life may give you some protection in the short run. But what does that life mean in the long run? Is this where you want to spend your life?

Out The System... And In Again

Que tranza, homies? It's me, Cholo, again. It's been a long time tha I haven't been caught up. I was off the system already, but I did some stupid shhh and ended up in the system again. I'm just doing my time like back in the day, but the great thing is that I get to spend Christmas with my family, because I get released on the 22nd of December. I also really feel bad because I let my jaina down because she didn't want me to end up here, otra vez (again), but I did, and I really miss her. Alratos, homies, Keep trucha.

-Cholo

From The Beat: Why do our writers talk about doing "stupid shhh" that brought them here is there any "smart shhh" that leads to jail? And you who had already experienced the system, to allow yourself to be caught up again, well, educate us about what it will take for you to stop doing the "stupid shhh" that leads to this temporary slavery?

My Love

I love my girl with all my heart
Every time they say her name, I go crazy
She's all my life, but I can't be with her
Because I'm here in this room
Just thinkin' of how I hurt her for gettin' locked up
But it nothing. I'll be with her soon
I love you, baby, with all my heart

-No Name

From The Beat: You say you can't be with this person you love because you are locked up, but isn't that the same thing as saying that you loved something more than you love her? After all, you knew you were risking being with her when you did whatever it was that gave the system the power to lock you up. Think about it.

Lucky Day

Today was a lucky day, because I went to court and they gave me a deal. They told me that I am not going to CYA, but I am going to do 18 months up in here. I get out the first month of 2009. I am going to be nineteen, almost twenty. When I get out it is going to be all bad. I am going to go to the 'hood and get drunk. But for now, all I could do is keep my head up high and stay on my toes. It's nothing to a G. I will be out one day. One love to nobody.

-Dopey

From The Beat: Yeah, you'll be out one day, but if you focus on getting drunk when that day comes, all this time will be totally wasted! We're not that worried, though, because you can do a lot of maturing in a year and half, so you may well not be the same person when you walk out of here.

My Role Model

My role model is my brother, Jordan. They call him Ucele. Yeah, he's been locked up. He's been in and out of da hall. He's been to Glenwood for nine months. He's been to county a couple times, too. He just got out a couple weeks ago. I love him so much. No matter what he's done, I'll always look up to him. Everyone says I'm just like him. Dis is my sixth time here, an' no matter what, he won't accept second. A bad ass, too. But dat don't matter. I'm just his baby sister an' in his eyes that will never change.

-Trouble

From The Beat: There's a difference between loving your brother and holding him up as a role model. If he is truly the model you want to follow, then you know what's in store for you — more county time, more lock ups, more giving away your freedom to a bunch of strangers. Love your brother? Yes! Follow in his footsteps? We'd think long and hard before going down that path.

The People I'm Afraid To Lose In My Life

The people I'm afraid of losing in my life are my family, my close folks, and my girl. I'm afraid of losing my family because they are always there for me, no matter what, when I'm locked up or doing stupid shhh. I'm afraid of losing my girl 'cause she always there, no matter what happens to me. I'm afraid of losing my own life because I do too much stupid shhh around the place I stay at. I always have to be looking out for people that don't like me because of who I am.

I'm afraid that my life wouldn't never change. But people know that when I die, I'm never coming back, no matter what. I'm afraid of losing my own life in this game, but to all the people I love, I will always be here for them. Well, I'm afraid of never seeing them again. But I don't know why I'm so afraid of losing them. Sometimes I feel like my girl and my family are the only friends I have. But why is that? That's a question I always ask myself.

-Johnny

From The Beat: You're thinking and fears are pretty one-sided, aren't they Johnny? You say you're afraid of losing the people you love, but that you don't believe your life will ever change. Isn't that a way to ensure that the people you love will always live in fear of losing you? Are their fears less important than yours? If you make no changes in your lifestyle, are you indirectly saying that you love it more than them? Is the measure of your love the words you say, or the things you do?

Told To Stay Away From Friends

I've been asked before to stay away from my friends before. It wasn't really asked, but told. I didn't do it 'cause I saw it like they was trying to control me and make me do things. I knew when something was going to happen. I was finna stop.

-Chris

From The Beat: Does this mean you don't let peer pressure make you do things you know you shouldn't do? Or do you let some people control you, but not others?

Boys

Boys stay
Boys go
Boys play
An' boys try to keep
Dem secrets on the down low!
Boys got to lie
Boys got to have
More than one chick
To share their bottle wit'
To me, that's what a fake ninja be doin!
Why is it so hard to be honest?
If a girl don't like you
Den she don't like you!
Just keep it movin!
Playin' wit' someone's heart
Ain' no game
Dis comin' from a broad with experience!
I don't do it to ninjas
Because I don't want them to do it to me!
Feel me?
Like some people say
"Treat othas the way you want to be treated!"

-Melino

From The Beat: If the world acted on that principle (the Golden Rule to treat others as you want to be treated), it sure would be a better place!

Whoa!

We went to da park
Wit' 40s in da ride
Blunts in our hand
We just wanted to have a good time
Then some people showed up
Tryin' to start some mess
So we stood up
Like, "You don't want to mess wit' us"
Then a gun went off
An I looked all around
Seen my homies laying there
Wit' blood spilling to da ground
I went into shock
Didn't know what to do
Everyone had scattered
Left me without a clue
So I started to hold him
Tryin' to keep him awake
But you could tell
He was quickly starting to fade
I heard sirens an' started to panic
What if they thought it was me?
I was covered in blood
From my shoulders to my knees
But stayed by his side
I couldn't leave him there
That's what friends do
They show dat they care

-Kayas

From The Beat: Oh! It took real strength of character not to run from your dying friend. We're so sorry you had to experience this. What happened when the police and the emergency personnel arrived? Did they believe you?

One Love

To all da readers, I just want to say, "aplyHappy Holidays!" I hope everybody make the best out of it. Even though we in here, just keep y'all heads up. I got faith in all y'all, even y'all who try ta play me, or who don't like me. I'm prayin' for all of y'all. ol

To ma girl, Lo, keep ya head up, family. Stay focused. You know if you need anything, I got you. To all ma coo' staffs — Ms. Navarro Alpine who showed me respect. Handle y'all business, keep ya heads up. If y'all eva need anything and y'all see me on da outs, hella talk to me. I'ma talk back.

-Karen

From The Beat: And we're prayin' for you, too. When you get out of here, don't come back!

The Afternoon After The Night Before

I would wake up still drunk from Friday night. I would smoke a cigarette and then brush my teeth. Then I would call some of my family members, and then see what I was going to do that day. I would wake up during the afternoon, and it would feel like the morning.

-Sammy

From The Beat: Is this a pattern your repeat every weekend? What foolishness do you get into when you're drunk the night before?

Ignoring Your First Mind

"Yes, I'm gonna do it." "No, it's not right." Hello! Wake up! I bet half of you are in here for not thinking before making your decisions. But guess what? It affects not only you but your family. It's not hard to say no, it's just as easy as saying yes. Do the right things.

Young ladies and gentlemen, I'm pretty sure half of you will see daylight again, and it sucks if you don't make better choices next time, because life is about choices.

-Jay-Jay

From The Beat: Physically, it's just as easy to say "no" as it is to say "yes," but psychologically, it can be very hard to say no when you fear being labeled weak. It takes really inner strength to say no to peers. We think you have that strength.

Get Yo' Money

Chorus:
Get yo' money
Stack ya dough
Get yo' money
Howeva way you know
Get it how you can
Howeva way is be upon yo' shhh
And take care of yo' bizz
Go one one
Like you own off a thizz
Get yo' dough
Stack yo' paper
Keep you head up
And dust off dem haters
Get yo' money
Verse:
You gotta get yo' money
Being broke ain't no joke
Walkin' through da mall
Can't even buy what you want
Dat shhhh ain't cool
You gotta get it how you can
Only depend on you'self
You don't need no man
Just to get what you need
You can handle it on yo' own
You ain't no lil' kid no mo'
Handle yo' business like you grown
You gotta stay on top
To be about yo' shhh
Don't let nobody block
Get a solid job
Get up out the streets
I'm spittin' real shhhh
As I spit my rhymes
To Da Beat

-Did Not Sign

From The Beat: This is like the third or fourth piece we've come to without a name. We hope you can find your piece among the many signed pieces, but next time we won't publish unsigned pieces. Make up a name, but put SOMETHING down. As far as you giving advice about how to live life, maybe you should examine why the choices you've made have led you to have to spit such fine rhymes from behind walls...

Lady

To me, a lady is a person who handles her business. She is like a flower growing up to be a rose. A woman is a lady who know what she want and needs, and isn't afraid to get it. A lady is a person who carries herself with class, and who is not ghetto, and would never let a man treat her with disrespect.

A lady is a female who is very independent and knows how to take care of her own business. A lady is an angel from God, and is very precious on this earth, so precious that she can create new life. A lady is a female who knows how to take care of her man. I am a young lady who is beautiful inside and outside. I have a beautiful personality. I am strong and I am a child of God.

-Karen

From The Beat: We love your description of yourself. We have to conclude that you were not the lady you wanted to be when you did whatever it was that brought you here since you say a lady knows what she wants and how to get it. We can't believe you wanted this, so something must have changed in you since you got here. Can you describe that change?

I Am Your Man

I am your man... my name is crack cocaine.
 Created by Satan... To control many women and men's fate.
 I'll have you doing things that once seemed impossible
 Degrading things that's extremely horrible.
 Selling your body for cash or crack
 To baby I'm the true mack.
 Have you walking the streets selling your soul
 Some will say I'm extremely cold.
 My job is to destroy this world
 And all the women, men, boys, and girls.
 I'm extremely evil
 Take one hit of me and I'll give you a fever.
 Seeing things that's not there
 And I really don't care.
 I got women selling their young daughters
 As I sit back enjoying them holla!
 From the pain
 As their pounded over and over again.
 Women even sell their kid's food
 Hanging out in the slums of the hood.
 Being used and abused
 This world better realize I can't lose!
 I'll cause a man to sell his ass
 For crack or cash!
 They say money is the root to all-evil
 I'm here to make you all out of true believers.
 Me and my cousin crystal meth
 Sometimes I wonder which one of us is the best.
 Most say I'm the best high
 'Cause I make them catch AIDS and die!
 I even have women walking in the rain

We love hearing from this next writer because he always brings great thoughts and ideas to our attention. This week he sends us three poems and all of them are brilliant in their own way. The first, "I Am Your Man," is an intelligent personification of crack cocaine. Using his extraordinary writing ability he amazes us with his thought process as he wonderfully compares this horrendous drug to that of an evil human being with no remorse. The second poem is about love lost and how lonely that can be while sitting in isolation. And last but definitely not least, he closes with a poem titled, "All This Pain" where he describes all the pain he has seen. And from what he wrote we can tell he's seen a lot. He's writing from the Columbia Correctional Institution in Lake City, Florida.

Having sex with many men
 Crack cocaine speaking loud and clear
 I'm the one you need to fear!
 Stay away from, I mean you know good
 Look at the destruction I'm causing in the hood!
 Spreading myself around the nation
 Sending thousands to prison with million's on probation!
 As you can see it's a terrible scene
 It's reality and not a dream!
 Ask the ones who've been there
 The stories they tell is like a nightmare!
 So wake-up before it's too late
 I'm the one who'll send you to your grave!
 Think of all the times I've sent you to jail
 How you craved for me begging to make bail!
 Going back and forth
 Living the life style of a whore!
 Male and female
 I'll make your life a living hell!
 Sometimes you'll think you're going insane
 It's because of me, CRACK COCAINE

All This Pain

All this pain and misery inside
 Many of nights I've found myself crying.
 Feeling so alone
 With a heart of stone.
 ALL this pain
 And tears that fall like rain.
 Losing family and friends cause of my life style
 Becoming a number in a prison file.
 Now everybody is gone
 Leaving me all alone.
 I get no letters or cards
 It's causing so much pain in my heart.
 When I was out there I was a baller
 Now my family and friends won't even accept my collect phone
 calls. Now I realize I was blind
 As I sit here doing my time.
 They was only my friends for what I could do
 The words in this epic poem is nothing but the truth.
 Even lost my wife
 Cause I chose a life full of strife.
 Drug dealers, Pimps, and Players
 Becoming a slave to the game for drugs, money, and material
 things. Now my money is gone
 My family and friends have left me alone.
 Through all the sorrow, hurt, and pain
 I'm becoming a better man.
 Nothing ever stays the same
 In my heart I've started to change.
 As these silent tears run down my cheeks
 Suffering unmistakable grief.
 Growing stronger with each passing day
 Knowing there has to be a better way.
 To get ahead
 I'll rest when I'm dead.
 Time to change people, places, and things
 And follow my dreams!
 So long to my so-called friends
 All this pain and misery has brought the madness to an end!
 Just remember my name
 That you all caused: all this pain!

How Can I Go On

How can I go on
 My heart filled with so much loneliness.
 Missing the one I truly love
 Living the life style of a hustling thug!
 So much misery and pain
 Will I ever be able to love again.
 With so much sorrow and pain in my heart
 Leaving the situation in the hands of the almighty God.
 It's out of my control
 The pain and misery touching my heart and soul!
 How can I go on when she's with another man
 Causing my tears to fall like rain.
 With visions of her beautiful face
 No other women could ever take her place!
 I know this
 Missing her tender hugs and kisses.
 And adorable smile
 And that sparkle in her beautiful eyes.
 Memories of all the times we've touched
 Will always mean so very much.
 These feelings will never change
 Without her I'm only half a man.
 I write this poem cause I love her more than anything in
 this world
 In my heart she'll always be my girl.
 No matter who she's with or where she goes
 I love her with all my heart and soul!
 Wishing her all the joy and happiness this world has to
 offer
 For me pain and suffering is the cost.
 Blaming no one but myself
 Cause I should have been there!
 Now that she's gone
 I'm wondering, how can I go on?

*The words; mostly come from the heart!
 That's! The Beat Within: how's this,
 for a start?*

True Beat

Mixed up, confused
 Dazed, from self-abuse
 Wasted youth, wasted times
 A spent life, paying, for the crimes
 Of, even... tomorrow?
 No! I must scream;
 I'm still, sleepless for the loss
 Of yesterday's dreams
 Seeing, today = it is more than what it seems.

No wasted words. Even as I conduct:
 Metaphor plays; sometimes, wondering
 If similes say, what I'm trying to say;
 Totally alive, dying beside my pain: it's locked in
 As, The Beat Within, irrigates:
 Tears outside, back in. That's the start, from the heart.

Unrevealing face: dry as a desert plane
 Smile: unspecific, as a blade of grass
 Standout: all the same, when uncorrupted by the mass
 Of unsuspecting souls, with hearts clear as glass
 No need to question, about the damage: it's been done;
 For I, too inflicted — some of the self-same, sum.
 But, with total disillusion — the truth is kind of odd:
 Millions of bodies, searing — yet, the heartbeats as one.

Sending love all the way from the Lanesboro Correctional Institution in Polkton, North Carolina, we give you a man who's definitely appreciative of The Beat Within and the work we do. In fact, he's so appreciative he sends us two poems about what The Beat means to him. And although we're not the type to brag or anything, we still like getting our egos stroked from time to time. We still, like everyone else, need to feel like people are into what we're doing in order for us to go on. We are grateful for people like this next writer because we know we're appreciated. Thank you for making us feel like that and we'll definitely be sending you some old Beats.

Energy-Futuristic-Fast-Rhyme

Ok, Beat = I got it!
 So now, I'm gonna say it!
 Don't spell check it, or punctuate it!
 Even, outdated — I'd still meditate it!

'Cause, the words; mostly come from the heart!
 That's! The Beat Within: how's this, for a start?
 So, let me tell you how I miss you:
 "Never mind the mail, officer — did I get another issue?"

Yeah, I'm writing this, for fun!
 But there's no denying, I'm like a fan you've won!
 Want more? These MEN locked down with me,
 Asking to see the 'mag,' that's what they call it,
 When Vibe is just another rag!

So how 'bout it, Beat? Got a couple old
 Issues laying around!
 Send 'em to Carolina: we'll pass them round!
 Reading 'em, to us, is better than the sound!
 Of commercialized rap, on the radio airwaves...
 Sorry to get emotional...
 But I had to say — we're missing you...today!

• DORTELL WILLIAMS •

Writing from a California State Prison in Lancaster, CA, we bring you a man who's very short with words, but is still very powerful with the ideas he brings to the table. This week he comes with a piece that was inspired by the book, "Eyes On The Prize" by Julianne Cage where he dares the readers to be different. He says that with slang and narrow culture many of us are just following everyone else's idea of what's "in." But if we were to silence our thoughts of what others are thinking of us, then maybe we can reach our full potential, but we definitely can't if we listen to what everyone else is saying about us.

Dare To Be Different

It's like we're all robots, or copycats. Everybody's doing the same thing. Slang's got us all talking like one another. Fashion's got us dressing the same and a narrow culture's got us acting, walking and gesturing alike.

How can we be creative, bust with something unique or set our own trends if we're so busy following everyone else?

I remember when I was in 3rd-grade. My mom put me in violin class. I wasn't feelin' it, at all. Not because there was anything wrong with violin. I just thought it was too soft, for me. Plus, people teased me. (They were actually building my character and inner strength, but I didn't recognize back then.)

Finally, I quit.

I regret that 'till this day. Very few African Americans play the violin. The 90's R&B groups, Soul II Soul very successfully showed the world that the violin could fit anywhere: Jazz, R&B, even Rock. I should've dared to be different.

Mexican golfer Lorena Ochoa dared to be different when she took up golfing at age nine. Now at twenty-five she's broke LPGA (Ladies Professional Golf Association) history, earning more than two million dollars in one season. Not bad for a girl who wasn't afraid to be different.

• JOEY TORREY •

We're publishing this because although it's evident that the writer doesn't know exactly what The Beat Within is, it's still a very sad piece. He's writing a bio of himself with the hopes of being hooked-up with someone, we assume, and unfortunately The Beat doesn't do that because it sounds like after doing thirty years, one would need someone to lean on, especially him being he has nobody anymore. He's writing from Mule Creek State Prison in Lone, CA, and this is just another way prison can mess your life up, so please don't fall into the same traps readers.

Joey's Bio

Hello from California! My name is Joey Torrey and to date I have served 30 years incarcerated. I am currently eligible for parole, but recently denied said parole based on no family, no friends, no community ties. With both of my parents passing away and old friends moving on in life the silence is deafening! So in my solitary existence I must reach out and begin anew. Even if I still feel 18; sadly I have not received mail in years.

I'm Rican and Siciliano, 5'9", 220lbs. and work out and mediate daily. Born in N.Y. raised in L.A. I'm old school and lost and lost in a time of love, compassion, kindness and being honest and open. I live in a drama free zone so bring the real Ma. (suki, suki, now) I arrived in prison at the age of 17; so at this point in my life being real is all I know. Truly I feel special someone is out there looking for me. But do drop in if only to say hello.

Dear Beat

It's been a long time since I wrote you guys, and I guess that's a good thing, eh? I don't even know if you guys are still around anymore. I ran into Jason Treas about eight months back up on Broadway when I was in "The City". I even ran into Matt Melamed a while back. And Arlene. They all told me how The Beat had no funds and that you guys may or may not be going out of business. I hope you guys are still around.

The Beat always did perform miracles.

To this day, it never ceases to amaze me how you could send two high school drop outs into a room full of "criminals" and give every last person in that room hope. Not just any "criminals" but young kids who have been told everyday of their life that they will never amount to anything. Confused juveniles who kept getting in trouble for doing the "wrong thing" but were being told they were nothing but a busy bunch of "criminals" to be able to allow those kids a chance to aspire towards something greater... now that's true power!

So powerful, I wouldn't believe it myself if I wasn't one of those kids you gave hope to. But I guess I ended up a failed case after all. Don't get me wrong; I'm not looking for words of encouragement, pity, or a motivational speech (even though I could probably use one just about now) I'm just saying I've failed. I am twenty-two now, and about to spend Christmas in jail, AGAIN!

Let's see now... my first Beat workshop was back when I was 15. That's seven years ago. Since then I have worked about 15 different jobs (I think my first was in your office typing my very own piece!) all unsuccessfully. I don't think I have ever experienced handing my employer a "two week notice." I have been in nine different county jails for various burglaries. I guess I grew addicted to cracking safes somewhere down the road. Sadly, however, I can still say I am proud that I have, not of yet, graduated to state or federal time... knock on wood.

Honestly, I don't know why I can't just succeed in life. I'm smart, have a ton of motivation, and have been given a ton of support over the years. I think that's it though. I keep expecting to "succeed," as if success is some tape that is stretched across the finish line, or sits on a shelf next to other trophies accrued over the years. I have no patience or determination I suppose. I have always been a fan of easy money. I like to go work for an hour or two then live happy and easy for a couple months. Rinse, wash, repeat?

I guess it wouldn't matter much. Shhh, I'm used to doing time now, and it always has been risk versus reward. I tend to aim for high rewards. But over the years the risk factor has gone way, way up. I have two kids now, and a wife that I'm not sure wants to be the wife of a man who's not there or wants a divorce.

I don't know how much you know/knew/remember about my story, but I ran away and got married. Moved to New Orleans and now my first kid, a beautiful daughter "Hope." Then when my wife was pregnant with my second child, a boy, I left. I came back to the Bay Area under the pretense that my wife and I

This special person and great thinker has finally gotten at us and we are really ecstatic. We met him a while back in our San Mateo workshops and then he got out and got a job with us in our office. He was going through his share of obstacles and eventually they became too much for him to bear and still work, so he moved on. Now, he's in the King County Correctional Facility in Kent, Washington. He sends us two poems and a letter we wanted to publish because it really reflects what The Beat means to certain people. His poems are equally powerful as he sends one for his children and another one that uses color to describe certain feelings and situations. He's still as intelligent, if not more, than when we had him in our office a couple of years ago. He is one of those people who will always have a place in The Beat Within as he always keeps a place for us in his heart.

didn't get along that we didn't love each other, and that I was not a fit father. Really I was just scared. I was scared of being with one girl doing the same thing for the rest of my life. I needed excitement. I did not see the birth of my son, and I left all the work to my wife. She begged me to come back to her, not just for physical support, but mental. She still loved me. I refused. It's no wonder that she broke down and fell to drinking. Her drinking led to her losing custody (luckily to her parents) and since I was in jail when it happened (two years ago for a different burglary charge) I couldn't help her or the kids. (I got out of jail and she was in treatment then flew to Virginia, where she was living with the kids and her parents. I begged her to take me back, for us to raise our kids together again, live happily ever after... yada, yada, yada. Her words were, "This is just like your dad asked your mom to move away with him when she was pregnant with you. Eff off." I have never met my dad, and supposedly my mom refused to be with him because he was heavy into forgery and what not. When she turned me away I broke down and went on a crime spree.

I think somewhere deep down I wanted to punish myself, because I was committing crimes without even covering my tracks. No gloves, no masks, no regard for police or security. It's like I wanted to get caught. Somehow, though, I got away with most of it and after a while I had a hefty little sum of cash. It's probably good I got locked up, because that cash was burning holes in my pockets, lungs, and liver if you catch my drift.

Now I am in Seattle fighting a burglary charge. Well not exactly fighting, I'm just waiting to be sentenced. Now my lawyer is confident I will get released January 7th with credit for time served, but we all know how that goes... I try not to get my hopes up 'till I'm out the door. I guess another habit I've developed over the years dealing with the mighty justice system...

It would be great if whoever reads this letter could write me back... shoot my own mother's reluctant to answering my calls. I don't blame her though; with all the money I've charged her in collect calls over the years. I am not a cold criminal, I do have a heart, and I just hope I can start to listen to it this time when I get out. I have a cycle to break, and I always promised myself I wouldn't be like my dad I know my kids need me, and in a way I need them... if that makes sense.

Thanks for taking the time to read.

The Ballad Of Color

Black for good times
Long gone away
Blue for the sadness
For emptiness gray
White devoid of color
Waiting to feed
On green
Money, power, craziness, greed
Nostalgia
Remembrance of times from the past
A melting pot of colors in hot iron caste
Memories flood me in a vagrance of dreams
A vortex of color and other glimmering things

So many colors, so little time
So many shades spread through my mind
Like a painters palate
But 'tis not my hand
That picks the colors, which make this man
Destiny chooses the way life will be
Paints us with colors man can see
Black for good times
Long gone away
Blue for the sadness
For emptiness grey
White devoid of color
Waiting to feed
On green
Money, power, craziness, greed

It's Funny

It's funny...
 I remember holding you in my arms
 For the Very First Time
 I remember staring into those eyes
 So blue. So deep. So true.
 "On this day, I do solemnly swear
 I will do anything,
 Yes
 Anything!
 Just to be there"
 How anything eventually changed
 From waking up at 5 am
 Every damn day
 To crooked police stares
 But hey that's just another excuse
 In a book
 I was once proud to author
 It's funny...
 Once upon a time not so long ago
 I had a dream!
 And in that dream,
 My little white girl
 And my little white boy
 Lived happy lives.
 They had everything
 Your little boy

And your little girl has.
 It's funny...
 That now I see
 That my dream was fueled by greed.
 And that greed...
 My greed...
 Was fueled by green.
 That promise I made, I meant it.
 That promise I made, I kept it.
 It's funny...
 Even I didn't know who or what
 That promise really was.
 I told myself "It's all for you."
 Everything I am, all that I would do
 But I only convinced myself.
 Shhh, maybe it's true
 That just like Popeye,
 The God-damn-forsaken-green-eating-sailorman,
 I yam what I yam and that's all that I can be
 It's funny...
 Now I yam farther from there
 Than I would have dreamt.
 Never do I think
 Selling my soul would mean
 Selling every last thing
 I thought it would bring.
 It's funny...

Who Has The Answers?

If Donald Trump said "you're fired ninja" it cost to be
 the boss
 Then how much would that comment, he just made
 cost?
 If I told you I see dead people, would you classify me as
 a dunce?
 Why when all the money I see, got dead people on the
 front?
 I know why Kerrine loves him, because his free style is
 truly insane
 And you know she ain't gotta problem with a ninja just
 coming off the brain!
 The IRS, all they want is money, their such a greedy
 label
 They're just mad because Bill and Lewinski handled
 their business under the table!
 Why did the FED's come and get Jacob, when he left a
 trail of paper
 When Enron got a slap on the wrist and they was
 passing bills like a legislator
 If my chicks a dime and a ugly chick never touched
 Please tell me, who in the hell is getting all these ugly
 chicks knocked up?
 Time flies like a bird; well at least that's what I was told
 Well why do it go up when it's hot and always go back
 when it's cold?
 If Bush's light bulb goes out, when he's the ideal man
 Do that mean we're out of a plan?
 And
 If I can't stand when you're around, do that mean, it's
 you I can't stand?
 If you are what you eat and I eat this shhh
 Do that mean, now I'm the shhh?

AMAZIN'

Writing from the Polk Correctional Institution in Butner, North Carolina, we bring you a man who's name says it all — Amazin'. He has an amazing way with words and is a true lyricist and we really appreciate that kind of art around these parts. His writing speaks for itself and you will most likely be blown away by his words. Thank you...

My Endtroduction

For years my life felt so un-sync
 That was until my heart began to leak
 These profound words, placed so gracefully on this
 sheet
 Of paper, stained with ink
 I feel like a mountain at its peak
 It's like a new level of high that I've reached
 Every time my mouth opens my mind speaks
 What my soul feels as my heart beats.
 Like colored glass my thoughts are stained
 So when my light bulb flickers, my ideas are insane
 What takes place in my head, to share it; sometimes I'm
 even ashamed
 So how can I control my actions,
 When it's my thoughts that are un-tamed?
 This can't be normal, even my agony feels pain
 I would repeat it, but no matter what, it will never sound
 sane
 My reality is in 3D, so I stay in the zone
 That's why I write with my right, so I could never be
 wrong
 I only got one nerve, so if you get on it, it on
 I'm so original, while you try to be a clone
 The sky is the limit, that's why my thoughts got
 thoughts on their own
 Let me stop while I'm ahead, ight, holla, I'm gone.

Thinking Of You

I close my eyes
And see your smile
It brings you close
Forget the miles
I imagine you here
And feel your touch
One of the many things
I miss so much
I think of your voice
Your loving words
Nothing sweeter

Could ever be heard
I crave the passion
That we share
Your every breath
Tells me you care
There's nothing better
In my life
Than having you precious
As my wife
I love you my love
Don't you see?
That without you
There's just no me

Watch out everyone! We have an outstanding poet on the scene and he's writing from the Sacramento County Jail in Sacramento, CA. He mainly writes poetry for who, we're assuming, is a woman who's waiting for him on the outside. And although these poems are extremely elegant, we found the one to his mother to be the most interesting. For we all know that when we're free, we usually don't treat our loved ones with as much care and attention as we should, but then when we get locked up we are reminded that those are the people who are most likely to look out for us when the chips are down. We enjoyed his poetry beyond explanation so we know you'll at least be entertained by it. Thank you for such beautiful words, which we are now publishing and sending off to you...

Ocean Song

Still and calm
It looks like glass
But when it's cut
It uproars fast
Peaceful glare
Of sun so bright
Or dark and cloudy
On a stormy night
The ocean lays
Like a story not told
And only nature
Could be so bold
As to tempt the forces
From above
That once were gentle
As a dove
Don't tempt fate
For I have found
I'm better off on solid ground.

The time apart

Sure seems unfair

But the times you visit

Really show you care

Your Picture

As I look into your picture
You eyes they draw me in
They take me to a beautiful place
That I'm graceful to once have been.

I daydream about the laughter
And the happiness that we shared
About the loving warm embrace
Your smile just showed you cared

I think about the words you spoke
And some that were never said
The way our hearts would do a dance
As we cuddled quietly in bed

Yes, I look into your picture
And I know one thing is true
All that keeps me hanging on
Is coming home to you

I love you!

Picture

Your picture that I have in hand
By itself it could not stand
For in dimensions it does lack
The third and foremost of the pack
It cannot kiss me on command
It cannot love me you understand
You know my loving words are true
Straight from my heart that burns for you
So fly to me do not delay
I cannot wait another day
Please save me from the torments of
This raging 3-dimension love!

Mother

I'm awaiting the time
When I am free
To spend some days
Just you and me

The time apart
Sure seems unfair
But the times you visit
Really show you care

Your support is so
Unique to me
It's far beyond
What eyes can see

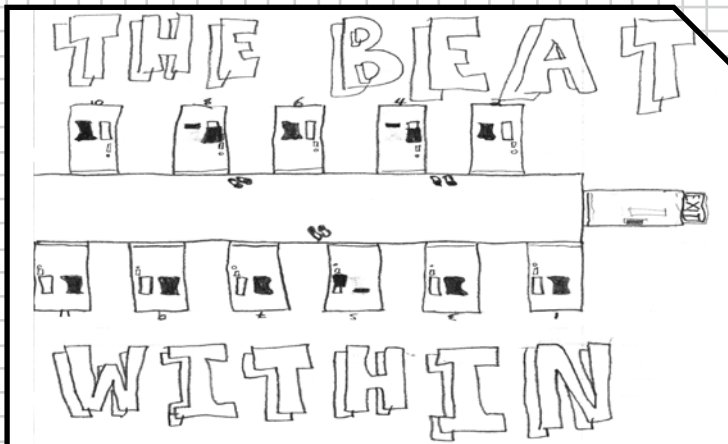
It begins way down
Deep in your heart
But that is just
A loving start

It continues to
The times you're here
And lift away
My loneliness and fear

You are a special
Part of my life
Standing strong
Through my pain and strife

You have always been there for me
No matter how far
I seemed to be

How loving and strong
You truly are
You are my matter
And my shining star
I love you mom!



This next writer is relentless with the pieces he sends us. He usually sends us stuff in about four to five envelopes and then we have to piece everything together. Well, when you write as good as he does, it's not a difficult task to put things together. In fact, it's not a task at all because we find what he has to say is interesting and we know you will too. He sends an incredible letter and a few short poems. And with each stroke of his pencil he expresses things to us that we find are treasures. He's writing from the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania. We're sure we'll hear from him again real soon.

Dear The Beat

Prison affords you the time to break down your life, your decisions, and attack every feeling, thought, or reaction you've had from many different angles. In that sense prison is therapeutic. And for me it gave me a chance to get a grip on reality and regain my sanity. I've seen it go both ways though — you either get bitter or get better.

I'm sending a few pieces about my feelings and thoughts about my indifference and the pain it caused. If you could send me a copy of anything you decide to publish that I send, it would be appreciated — I want to save them, plus cats get down and kick mad wisdom, I love to hear something that makes me think from a different point of view, and lastly your commentary is enlightening. Take care until next time.

PS, If you want to check out some of my older stuff look me up at poetry.com. Also I think its great you're helping troubled youth find their inner voice to those that are incarcerated — much respect.

Always Mine

Whether a walk down the street
 Or step to the beat, in heat or ice cold
 Taught, told, young and old alike
 Bikes on the beach within reach
 Florida through Georgia peach,
 Teach me well the language of heart
 Two hearts united by God
 Always and forever my infinite everything

Of Friendship

Friendship is a hand that cannot be broken
 No words spoken describe devotion
 That comes from the heart
 When souls connect and minds reflect
 On destructing surrounding
 Things confounding me you untie
 And to save your life I'm willing to die
 Conversations get deep
 Reflections upon in the night
 Contemplating until sleep
 About creating and the good fight
 Making sense out of our lives
 Direction and goals
 Roads traveled and souls

Wise To The Lies

The heat is hot
 Ever see the fire breath of a shot
 In the dark aimed at your head
 Glowing red
 Most with this knowledge dead
 Many would glorify
 By grace I testify
 Not really to meet God's eye
 I've not lived a righteous life
 And so question myself as to why
 But he gave me a second try
 I pray I can stay with him the rest of the way
 Wasted so much time wasted, high
 My family I terrorized
 My father with tears in his eyes
 As his son got sentenced, carried off, quick goodbye's
 Getting locked up, to me, has been a blessing in
 disguise
 It gave me time to get wise to the lies I've told myself
 To justify living in hell

Distractions To Truth

Not a victim of the streets
 But a victim of self-defeats
 Stinkin' thinkin', druggin' and drinkin'
 As quick as you blinkin'
 It can be taken
 Families' hearts' breakin'
 A beautiful life forsaken
 You've got to take into account
 The amount of energy
 Spent on negativity
 Channel that to creativity
 It's sad to see bad things happen to good people
 You reap what you sow
 But sometimes before you fully know
 Consequences to actions
 Can blindsides you like distractions
 To truth

I think its great you're helping troubled youth find their inner voice to those that are incarcerated — much respect.

Consequences

He put down his college books and picked up an M-16,
Traded in the Levi's for camouflage green,
Did a few months in basic training,
And kissed his family good-bye,
Now he's fighting in Iraq for his life over a political lie.
He thought he had an obligation as an American man,
But now he's fighting a war that he doesn't understand.

Political propagandists waging a self interest war,
"Democracy" is an oil stain beneath the blood and gore.
Too late, there's no escape from, this murderous
illusion,
It's master Bush's mass abuse and mass confusion.

After two short moths he's returning home,
And the penalty is great;
With the stars and stripes draped over his coffin,
He's flown back to the states.
His poor mother cries and his father's silent
During the twenty-one gun salute.

Now all that remains of a 20-yr-old boy
Is a medal and spit-shined boots...

Where Is Your God?

When the tsunami hit and devastated a whole town;
When the earthquake struck and brought building down;
When the airplanes flew into the sides of the World
Trade Center towers;
When the videotaped hostage begged to live for one more
hour;

Where was your God?

When a father beats his child on a daily basis;
When the oppressed cower in fear under the boots of
racists;
When a mother sells her soul for a hit of meth or crack;
When the police fires warning shots into a young kid's
back;

Where was your God?

When poor people must sleep on the rich nation's
streets;
When lower-class families can't even afford to eat;
When an innocent person is condemned to Death Row;
When a Catholic alter boy falls victim to a homosexual
priest's dark soul;

Where is your God?

Writing from the Crossroads Correctional Center in Cameron, Missouri, we give you a man who really knows what he believes in. He speaks about politics with a very sharp and refined point of view. We have no choice but to find his thoughts refreshing. He knows how to express himself in a way that will definitely convince you that he knows what he's talking about. And after reading his very hard-hitting ideas, you'll see that he does know what he's talking about. We'll leave this introduction at that because he speaks volumes for himself. We really hope he continues to bless us with his incredible writing. Thank you for your very intelligent thoughts.

Ask Yourself

Does the end justify the means?
Is life truly what it seems?

If you hear the echoes of the man's screams,
Sentence a man to death, can you watch him die-
And feel remorse in your heart when his family cries?
If he were one of your own, would it still be wise
To strap him in an electric chair and let the sparks fly?
When it hits close to home, do the rules then change?
When it's one of your own don't it feel strange
To see him dragged to the gurney in steel cuffs and chains,
A needle in his arms to stop his heart and brain?
Sure changes things when it's someone you know,
When you raised him from a baby and watched him grow.
Now he's a man of his own, living on Death Row,
Waiting for the date that says it's his time to go.
As the day gets closer, don't you feel the fright?
You've known since day one, the system ain't right.
Now it's one of your own, you want to rally and fight;
Don't want your baby to fade away because the state's
taken his life.

Birth Of A Menace

I had a lot of big dreams as a young kid,
Tried to make people proud by what I did.
Tried to make future plans with happy concepts;
Swore to never follow Dad in his footsteps.
Tried to keep my head up, despite his beatings-
Echoed screams, mama's pleading,
Lay dying, broke and bleeding.
At an early age, I realized, "you're on your own kid;"
Sick and tired of the pain and broken-home shhh.
Had a heart of stone from such an early age,
The results of being beat, broke and stated-raised.
Now they say I'm a menace, and they fear me,
But all those years I begged for help, they didn't hear
me!
All alone and once again in the prison system,
Crazy thoughts in my mind, I can't resist 'em.
Grew up just like the man I always hated,
The next 34 years of my life; incarcerated.
All the ones family and friends who promised me they
would be there,
Can kiss my narrow white ass for pretending that they
did care.
I am merely the result of how family and the corrupt
system made me;
Now they can't face the truth, so they evade me.
Once again I realize, "You're on your own, son."
It's hard to miss a loving family when I've never really
known one.
No phone calls home can't seem to shorten the distance,
When they've all turned their backs on my existence.
Now a dark little cell in the system is my home,
Where I hear the echoed whisper, "You're all alone."
"You're all alone, on your own..."

*Now they say I'm a menace,
and they fear me,
But all those years I begged
for help, they didn't hear me!*

Evil Lurks Behind The Bush

Nightly news clips get censored and edited,
Countries get vaporized; the US gets credited.
The innocent chant, "Oil for food — food for oil,"
But we can't salvage a damn thing from blood-soaked soil!
Bush says, "We're hated for our freedom, and American ways"
But this thing he calls "freedom" sends millions to their graves.
If a man's not a Christian. Does that mean he must pay
And be crushed to death beneath the jackboots of the USA?
Now Bush has sent his so-called "freedom-fighters" out,
And countries are terrorized, crushed, and bombed out.
The tension is high and fate is turning
With vision of devastation and bodies burning
Children crying out for their missing mothers;
Fathers burying sons and sisters burying brothers.
Greed and hatred lead to crossing lines
Streets covered in rubble,
Fields full of land mines.
So much death and destruction in the name of
"nationality;"
If you don't embrace American beliefs, you'll become
another casualty.
Headlines...
Statistics...
Another deadly sequel.
Why doesn't the "Land of the free" treat It's own citizens equal?
Imperialistic agendas cloaked in red, white, and blue;
You pledge allegiance to this country; but will they
pledge it to you?!
Mr. President, if you call this freedom,
Then I don't want to be free
I don't want a Third World nightmare
To be my American dream.

Perpetual Anarchism

Tear down the stars and stripes and burn it,
Embrace ideology and learn it.
Teach your children the real facts of history,
Why the U.S. evades the truth remains a mystery.
Open up this racist fraud, forget your orders!
Put the Christian right back in its place,
Raze the prison walls unlock the gates.
Give the First Nation People back their land,
This is true meaning of anarchy, understand?!
Take the millions of homeless people off the streets,
Make sure they have clothing, shelter, and plenty to eat.
Remove the pompous judges from their perches,
Prohibit political lying agendas from the churches.
Bring the beast to its knees
Tear off its head!
Liberate the White House
Paint it red!
Disarm every weapon of the war machine,
Open college doors to the poor; make education free.
Autonomy breeds liberty without capitalism,
Live free;
Express your dreams;
Perpetual anarchism!

The Breeding Ground Of A Revolution

The strike against them will be made when they least expect it,
They think our class is weak, so they'll never respect it.
They put meth and crack in the streets to dilute our minds;
They put guns in our hands so we'll kill our own kind.
They make laws and pass bills to limit our choices,
They build prisons and death-rows to silence our voices.
The media tells stories instead of real news,
They don't expose crooked police or prisoner abuse.
From their lofty high-rises they look down on us,
For too long we've been blind to the oppression that surrounds us.
But, look around us...
They cut back college grants so we can't better our lives,
Now the military offers a "bonus" to those who don't die.
Would you like to buy a home or give your kids an education?
Just enlist in the army and go kill a whole nation.
They'll call you a national hero and you'll be adored by others,
Because your covertly gassed babies and executed their mothers.
Life, liberty and happiness: it's just a mirage,
And you're an over-rated killer with medals and camouflage,
But you now deep in your heart that it's a terrible sin
So, how can you possibly feel proud to be an American?
Now, think again...
For those of us who are conscious and aware of our fate,
They'll label us "terrorists" and "enemies of the state."
We'll be fighting the beast and its evil beliefs,
It's corrupt, murderous henchmen and commander-in-chief.
The president; a true puppet master of oppressive precedent,
The nation's capital only true hell-bent resident.
He's following in his father's footsteps for there are shoes to be filled;
No WMD's found and over 2000 young kids in Iraq killed.
Be in their army fool — "Be all you can be"
But dead ears can't hear the cries of Lady Liberty.

The Freedom Diet

Bloated twisted emptiness—
Intestines seized
By savage cramps
Of starvation.

Left alone,
Wondering
And asking, "Why?"

No answers from within
The devastation,
Desolation
And ruin.
Just a young child
Too weak to cry,
Slowly dying
From U.S. "democracy" and "liberation."

Ghost Town, USA

Today's news is reporting stories about nothing new.
And Washington's starting statistics that aren't even
close to true.
"The crime rate's dropping," bureaucrats are surmising,
But in my hood the system's blind to the death toll
rising.

Screams if you want to, the echoes will haunt you.
How can you trust a system that just oppresses and
taunts you?
Got the police cruisin' by with that power gleam in their
eyes;
Another man gone to the Pen; another fatherless child
cries.
They played a 30-second sound byte on the 6 o'clock
news;
10 billion to the military and they're closing down our
schools.

Last night, midnight, the police swore they saw a knife;
Five warning shots to the chest took the young boy's
life.
He was only eleven and shouldn't have met this deadly
end;
In his dying has was this murderous slaughter with
their ignorant small talk
While his poor mother stares and cries at the chalk
lines on the sidewalk.

Eyes are closed and backs are turned to the plight or
our kind;
Now I can clearly see he true meaning of "No child left
behind."
On the other side of the great divide,
In an upper class town,
They exchange white washed lies with that death gleam
in their eyes...
While they claim...
"The crime rate's going down..."

Shattered

Shrill screams
Broken sleep
Living this vivid nightmare
Over and over again.

He vents
His rage
Unrelenting
Unleashing
Swinging hate
Pain
Fury
Broken weeping

Please don't hurt her (no more).
Unspeaking bruised and bleeding.
Help wails in the distance (please hurry).
Don't be scared-
Don't cry (please don't).
It's going to be okay (I hope)...

Dedicated to and written for my Mom who my father beat
to death.

A Democratic Society

Welcome to America friend- the so-called land of the
brave,
Where the rich build dreams on poor dead men's graves,
Where history is taught from fraudulent propaganda
pages,
And it's poverty stricken citizens are locked up in steel
and concrete cages.
This isn't my land-
This isn't your land.
It was built from slave labor- the fruits of the red and
black hand.
Just ask the true Native American's, whose rights were
deprived,
Were they greeted with open arms or murdered when the
pilgrims arrived?
Rape, plunder, pillage — inevitable desecration
That's the sorry and true history of this sadistic, evil
nation.

Forced permutation
Push the blindfold from your eyes and see the evil lies,
While the rich get richer, the poor class dies.
In this stolen blood stained land, money represents
power,
As the skyline is over-shadowed by prison walls and gun
towers.
If we the poor don't rise as one and stand together as
one
We'll slowly be condemned to our deaths as one.
For these sadistic despot rules there's only one
solution;
Our class must stand as one for a mighty revolution!

Stats Of Disillusion

Clear the capitalistic cobwebs from your eyes;
Dare to notice the shattered pieces of our broken lives.
Pay the overdue reparations for your civil rights crimes,
Be honest with yourself and cease your wicked lies.
Finger points at a young man: "uncle Sam wants you!"
In the name of "Freedom?!"
Doesn't your conscience taunt you?
Thousands of young souls lost;
Don't the headstones haunt you?
Bush, still smiling at the cameras?
Glad because it's not you?

In this land of "liberty," from which hypocrisy hails,
Money is God, God is money, and the hunger for power prevails;
In the heart of the homeland, its very own system fails.
Wrong nationality?
Police brutality and over-crowded jails.
Soldiers ingrained with hate, kill for "patriotic" beliefs
Death is just a hobby for the American commander-in-chief.
Napalm cremation,
Devastation,
Masters of war and grief.
Spreading "democracy," one country at a time,
Unrelenting,
No relief.

And still, your war-room fascists create neurotic plans
To wage a "war on drugs" and decimate foreign lands.
In the end, millions are slaughtered for not submitting
to your demands
Uncle Sam, why do your so-called "heroes"
Have so much innocent blood upon their hands?

For Lovely

Pressed for hard time situations
As one, I am your gangsta no longer on the run
Feeling swayed towards my mija
And my dad, the two of you the only and most
Important thing in my life or else
My life forever sad, forever sad.

Bless you for
The pictures, bless you for the letter and bless
You my dear for beholding
Our precious son with deep comfort and care I
Know no one would have done
Better

Let realization reign and believe my soul
The fear of losing you the
Worst possible scenario of control
No more promises spoken
Promises broken

Keeping it real and honest
For oneness together, history forever
Lights now dim time to dream
Another dream, different yet hopeful outcome the same.
By your side as my bride walk down that
Aisle hand in hand, vows diligent
We'll make a courageous stand
Worry a contagious symptom
Faith reels happy time laughter never
Lonesome
Treasure life for place of security, comfort opportunity

Acceptance for simple
Comfort that silence brings when things left
Unspoken can still be
Understood

For you and Adyn I will go that extra mile
I truly would
A vision as one growing old with you
Watching proudly our
Son's life unfold respectfully and
Our dreams one by one come true
Thoughts of your patience
Our son experimenting growth maybe
Doing something that reminds
You of me can't wait to share
To be free
Jen don't you wish I was there
To hold dad when crying, a helping hand
When you're sighing
To close my arms around you when
You're honey a feeling of
Reassurance from me your only
Jen baby you're in my heart, you're in
My soul you make me complete and
Yearning to know, are you
Feelings still strong and real, can I
Still capture your appeal
Living together loving each other
Through good times and bad
Happy times and sad. By trust and faith
Through the lord up
Above relinquish all failed sequences
For passive manic love.

Intimate emotional deprivation is such a difficult thing to deal with — so difficult, people who've never been locked up could never understand. Imagine living in the memory of a relationship while the other half of that relationship is moving on with their lives. Sometimes they also can be sustained by memories, but most of the time, distance is too much to handle and people find comfort in someone else. This fact is devastating for those who are incarcerated because we want so bad to have those feelings of being loved being they're so hard to get in jail. This next writer speaks of love quite often and we've explained our thoughts on why. But as he explains his feelings, you can tell he's not your ordinary lover. He really feels a deep passion for the one he loves and now it bleeds through our pages. We enjoy his writing and he sends it to us from a California State Prison in Chino, CA.

Together Forever

Dreaming about you
Every night and day,
Praying for you
In special righteous way

See you in my sparkled heart of visions
Breaking all the rules for spiritual missions

Sweetheart, you truly are so special
And so real
By the way you make people feel, I feel
Special too just by being with you

If more people in this world were more
Like you within,
It would be a much better place to
Live in

Please don't
Ever change

Just arrange
Go bless you in all ways
Through all days.

I'll Always Love You

The nicest feeling I've ever know
Is being in love with you, Jen.

Thank you for the memory of these feelings, Jen
For bringing me happiness
As though it were a gift,
I could open everyday
...I thank you—Jen

For listing the words I want to say
...I appreciate you—Jennifer.

For letting me share the most personal
Parts of your world and for welcoming
Me with those beautiful big green eyes
...I am truly grateful for you mija

For just being the wonderful, kind
Giving person you naturally are
...I'll always admire you, Jennifer

For being the most beautiful light
In my life
...I'll always desire you

For being everyone you once were
To me and for doing it so, "damn beautifully."
...I'll always love you.

Life

Life is pain, for just a short gain,
Through the years, were drenched in tears,
People live and they die,
Some live longer with no reason why,
People take more than they give,
This is how some chose to live,
Peoples birthdays pass and go,
Rivers flourish from melting snow,
With every day that slowly fades,
A child is born and lost in play,
People learn so they can teach,
The stars are something kids dream to reach,
The wise share lessons with the youth,
Just as the ocean is deep and blue
Every day is filled with choices,
Distracting us with inner voices,
Right is wrong but bad is good,

This is easily understood,
When we fall we learn to rise,
Rocks are beaten by the ocean tides,
The birds they soar through the air,
Lost in tranquility without any care,
But what is life to you and me, is it a pool of tragedies,
Is it one big catastrophe or is it dedicated to your
majesties
That creates land and the seven seas,
There is only one way we'll see,
Want to greet your destiny,
We all have a path laid ahead of us, but with each step we
can trust,
We must wonder if it's the right direction,
We must separate truth from fiction,
After we travel through the loops and bends,
And we can see the inevitable end,
We must make the most important decision,
To keep going forward or just stop livin'

I See You

I see a woman, strong, independent
I see a woman, who's love is never-ending
I see a woman, who's kisses are soft as clouds
I see a woman, protecting her child

I see a woman, beautiful, reliable
I see a woman, thoughtful, desirable
I see a woman, who's sexy and sleek
I see a woman, who's whole, complete

I know most women feel that men are not real
All aren't the same, there is some who could feel
Your emotions, your worries, your needs and wants
The desires to be secure, no games, no fronts

To be loved directly, no fears, no limits
No complications of any kind, when its time to get in it
So I tip off my hat to you, Ms. Woman, the real deal
Cause I see you out there, everything about you I feel

STONE

We are always inspired by genuine compassion, so it was our pleasure to read this next writer's three poems. His first, "If You Never Try," is a great warning to a woman who, we assume he loves, and is apparently in an abusive relationship. This poem grabbed us because it's obvious, due to his situation, that he has no ulterior motives other than raw care and concern for this woman. The second poem is about the color of his skin and how it relates to the roots of his family. Then he concludes with a poem titled, "I See You," which is obviously to all women in the world. He really has an enormous heart. Well, in any case, he's writing from Corcoran State Prison in Corcoran, CA.

If You Never Try

I seen when he pushed you, he looked pretty mad.
The issue seemed small because you didn't seem sad.
It bugs me some, who am I to come in between.
Who you choose to hold, in life, share all your dreams.
Maybe you're not strong enough to tell him how you
feel.

Does he even know, abuse, eventually, will kill.
How do the kids feel, they see all the abuse.
I know you've tried so hard, to maintain, call a truce.
You're frightened, scared, worried about what happens
after.

Your dignity, happiness, should be the main factor.
What if you're gone, would he mourn the loss.
Or would he pretend that he is still the boss
When will you realize that you're so much more.
Please get the courage up, to walk out that door.
I guarantee that the life you want, is on the other side.
Than again you'll never know if you never try.

Blackness In Me

The color blackness is something to be seen.
Just look around and you will see.
Blackness is you, blackness is me.
Blackness is my sister, blackness is my breed.
Knowing my blackness I will succeed.
No other color comes out of my seed.
Just look at my child and you will see.
The blackness in me.



To The Beat

First of all, let me tell you that your publication is off the hook! The approach being used is 100% on target. I'm not sure how many other organizations are out there like yours, but I was never exposed to one like it until now. Thank the Lord for people like yourselves.

I am currently fighting a life sentence in the small town of Woodland, California. I am a twenty-eight year old male and can relate to many of the topics and stories in The Beat. At one time, I was a youngster from a broken home filled with anger and rage. I've done almost all the stupid things a kid can do at least once.

I've been exposed to gangs – actually I'm missing my front (teeth) because of a forty bottle to the grill by gang members. My mother is a Sacramento County Probation Officer of over twenty years and educated me very well on the psychology of most gangsters. I'm only thankful that I never fell prey to a gang. You see, I don't really respect what they are all about. I can however relate to and understand all the reasons that our youth are at risk.

In and out, in and out – Juvenile Hall was my thing for a while. No major crimes, just fights and things that always kept me in the system. At about sixteen, I hit a program up in Nevada called "Rite Of Passage" (ROP). It saved my life. I was violent, angry, and my future didn't look bright. I went to ROP and came out a new kid. I'm sure if I would have went to YA, I would have come out new also, in a scary way.

That intervention in my life saved me. It's so important to reach these kids at a young age. The Beat gives an outlet to all these youth. You let them know they are important and let them educate each other. The Beat is the Napster of youth rehabilitation! More seriously, your approach is penetrating.

Kids can close up when they hear about God or even when approached by counselors. The Beat allows them to express and absorb knowledge from each other. As you know, kids won't change until they have been touched on the inside. They might say, "Yeah, yeah, yeah," but they don't mean it. From reading The Beat, they become their own teachers. From personal experience, I never changed until I wanted to.

Well, now you might say, "Fool, you didn't change, you're looking at life." For one thing, I didn't change one hundred percent. I did gain a better attitude, a desire to stay free and, to my discredit, a desire for money. I've been out of trouble for ten years now – well, at least eight, I'm not sure.

After deciding to change, I started working. I worked eight hours at a newspaper and then eight at a diesel tire shop. You know the theory that you can't get in trouble if you don't have time. I did real good for about five years until I got burnt out.

I decided to make money in an easier fashion – self-employment. Boy, I chose wrong. My thought was that I wasn't hurting anyone that didn't choose to hurt themselves. What a selfish excuse. Now

Mike, a first time contributor, comes our way from Monroe Detention Center in Woodland, California. As you'll read in the excerpt from his letter, Mike came across The Beat and was impressed by what it's all about. He's about just doing his time and going home. He makes it very clear that he didn't go to jail to make friends, so he'll do his time independently. We hope more of you could follow suit. We thank Mike for his submission, and we hope to hear more from him in the near future.

I see the effects it can have on people. Now I see the effects it can have on other people. I've repented for my sins and found God through this mess, so I am thankful.

The bad part is I'm now indicted along with seventeen or so gang members for some shootings they did. It's all very confusing and would take too long to explain. So far, about six people have been released because of wrongful indictment, so that's a good thing.

I'm no gang member, not even Hispanic. It was pretty comical being drug into court along with seventeen other Mexican gangsters with my White ass on the end. It's the same old saying, "Guilty by association."

Don't get me wrong – I wasn't going to church and selling cookies. It's just tragic that our justice system is so flawed. It's too complicated to explain it all, but let's just say the DA isn't having a clear view of the situation, or is choosing not to. I just keep my faith strong and chalk this up to a lesson. A last step towards being a good citizen and a godly one. I've had plenty of time to think, and just like my first choice at twenty or so, I've made another one.

I want to help our youth and people in general. Guys come through here with drug problems or that are prejudiced. If I notice those things, I try to help them. I have a son who is half Black. I have friends of all races from Mexican to East Indian. I'm a people person and I think I've reached a few souls. At least I hope I have.

The saddest thing is the drugs. I hear guys every day beg on the phone to get out to their parole officers, moms, dads. Ten seconds later, they can't stop talking about that dope they want. Sad, very sad. I hope from my effort they get a different view. I tell them, "Look I'm an accused baller, not your mom or a priest." I explain my troubles and with some it seems to help. I battle with alcoholism and can relate on that level. I have also lost friends to drugs. I work with any angle I can to get through to them. Fortunately I've been exposed to drugs but strong enough to stay away.

In short, I'm hungry to do exactly what you people are doing. I hope to get the chance to help youth. For now, I'm down twenty-three hours, so I'm trying to get my GED and improve my English skills. Seeing your work has given me hope. Are there any sponsors of yours I can write to thank them and express my feelings towards the wonderful publication you people produce? If possible, I would love to support your organization in any way I can.

Thank you for your time. God bless.

*I'm no poet, I just hear the sound
A thunderous pounding,
The Beat coming down.*

I'm No Poet

I'm no poet, I just hear the sound
A thunderous pounding, The Beat coming down.
The thought of hearts breaking, the falling of tears
Words from The Beat, filling their ears.
What do they think? What do they feel?
Do they chalk life up to another raw deal?
All these thoughts run through my mind
If we can save one, it's all worth the time.
The system is broken, their minds are too
That leaves the fixing to people like you!

Independence Today

Just some sucka, I am not!
To be your punk, that's not my spot.
Handle your own, I'll handle mine.
Cry on your own, doing your time.
On the street, women to meet
People to see, people to greet.
My true homies, all to the good
Still kickin' back, up in the 'hood.
No different than you, just smarter you see
I have the strength to let me be me.

You know it's crazy how all these lawmakers can't see that kids only join gangs out of weakness. They break them down and put them together in rough places, away from their families. Personally I think the system is the main problem and The Beat Within provides a second family to them, and in some cases their only family. Keep it up and God bless!

A Day In The Hall

Taking a deep breath
As he wakes up for another day
The click at his door
Means it's time to get his tray

Already starting to stress
Because he knows the day's schedule

Hygiene's coming up
Then it will be time to hit the classroom
Same old teacher there
Expecting homeboys to do the work.

Instead they stay talking
While counselors are feeling urked
Giving people hours
Sending homeboys to their rooms

Contraband is found
By the staff that's searching beds
Nobody giving ownership
To the small piece of lead

Lunch is finally hear
Time to go back to the room
Thinking about your girl
And what she's up to

Wanting to get sentenced
As a court date comes near
But all they do is continue it

Your anger builds up fast
And you start to get mad
A tear starts to shed
But you wipe it away fast

Going back to the unit
With our hands behind your back
Thinking about what happened
In the last five minutes that passed.

You go straight to the courtyard
To play handball with the homies
They asked you what happened at court
But all you can say is nothing.

They tell you don't trip bro
It happens to the best of us
You say yeah I know
And leave the conversation
To rest

Your hour comes to an end
So it's back to your room for now

You show respect to all the homeboys then take it straight
down
Your day comes to an end when you lay down in your bed

It's still too early to sleep
So your mind drifts to the streets
And all that you left behind

You think about your family and if your punishment fits the
crime

These are the type of days that we in the hall face
You hear the click of the door again and your day begins the
same.

We usually hear great things about the Glen Mills School in Concordville, Pennsylvania, where this next writer is sending this array of poems from. But like with everything in life, there are two sides to this coin. He gives us the ugly side to the coin in a few of his several poems. Some are about love and the trials and tribulations that come along with that emotion while others are about his days in the hall. He's made his journey to a whole 'nother state, but has continued to keep his journey through writing a part of ours as well. We'll leave you with a great quote from his poem, "A Day In The Hall." "It's still too early to sleep, so your mind drifts to the streets and all that you left behind. You think about your family and if your punishment fits the crime. These are the type of days that we in the hall face. You hear the click of the door again and your day begins the same." Well, hopefully his day will be a little different when he receives this latest issue with his piece in our most cherished Beat Without section.

Meeting Someone Special

We met each other in class
When I asked to borrow a pen
You smiled and said sure
And started looking in your bag

I asked you what your name was as you answered I told
you mine
Then we shook hands for the very first time

You helped me with math problems that I couldn't seem
to understand
We built a little friendship but it only stayed in class.

I wanted to know more
About this beautiful girl I met
So I asked you for your number
Knowing I didn't have a chance

You told me no but only because your parents were very strict
I said oh it's cool thinking it's just some excuse
Two weeks past from that moment
and you handed me a number
You said it's your new cell phone and I could call
whenever.

I smiled and said I'd do that
I dialed your number when I got home
But was quick to hang up when I heard the ring tone

Thinking to myself what the hell is wrong with me
Just call her but then I think now
She's way out of my league

Eventually I built up the courage and called your cell phone
We started talking for minutes then they turned to hours
We got to know each other and would both call one another

I liked what was going on and the relationship we built
together

From that moment on I knew I wanted to be with you
forever

My wish almost came true until I got in trouble
I hurt you so much something I said I'd never do
I left you in the dark for 18 months of time.

I told you I was sorry knowing it won't get you back
If I told you that a million times
I really am sincere about everything I say
I learned to speak from the heart not just hollow lies
from the brain.

I'm going to tell you one last time that you're the one for me
I love you with all my heart and want you to be with me.

Another Dream

A twinkle in her eye when she finally seen him home
 A girl that was so happy to hear her boyfriend's tone
 He was no different with a look that only she could give him
 Tears of joy filled his face giving her a kiss without a moment to waste
 Holding his love with so much passion
 Not wanting to let go for an instant
 Telling her he loves her and she doing the same
 Being in each others presence forgetting about the pain
 Just loving every feeling that is being expressed
 It's time to get up Manuel and he awakes from his dream
 Into an environment of stress
 Where he cannot see his girl again until he goes back to bed

*As the sky starts to lighten
 and the sun starts to show
 A tear falls from my eye be-
 cause I'm thinking about my girl*

Still Loving You

Catching the light of the stars above
 Looking at the picture of the only girl that I love
 Holding hands and blowing kisses
 Smiling and laughing damn I miss this
 Thinking of all the good times we had
 Wishing I had a time machine to go back in the past
 Wondering what you're up to and if you're thinking of me
 But I know you are you told me so in my last dream
 As the sky starts to lighten and the sun starts to show
 A tear falls from my eye because I'm thinking about my girl
 I hear her voice in the wind and smell her scent in the air
 Only if I could tell her how much I still care.

A Vision

Days and days pass while they turn into weeks
 It's been a couple of years since I was caught on the streets
 Sent away far — actually to the other side of the map
 Wishing away my time so I could finally go back
 I see the golden state in my dreams at night
 Just waiting for them to wake me up
 So I can catch my plane flight
 I know there's people waiting for me to come home
 Especially my girl she makes me feel like a king on my thrown
 These thoughts got my head spinning only a couple more months
 To all locked down just keep your heads up.

A Path That Was Taught

An older brother making a path for the younger brother to follow
 He led him to a field of violence with no hope for tomorrow
 An older brother showed him the way to wear his pants and hair
 He showed him how to fight and no matter what never be scared
 An older brother living the life he was taught to live
 By older generations the life that they taught him
 An older brother charged with an assault with a deadly weapon
 Pleading guilty to the charge and also taking gang enhancement
 An older brother watching the younger brother go down for the same crime
 But this time it's different they want to give him a lot more time
 The younger brother looks up to the older brother for help
 The older brother says sorry you have to figure it out yourself
 As the older brother sits there thinking about what he's done
 He led another family member to the system a system that's no fun
 He tells the younger brother he's sorry for what he's done
 By leading the wrong path he put him in a messed up situation
 He can't do his younger brothers time for him
 But he can change his path to a better way of life
 So he tells his brother this and he says
 If you do good for me then I'll do good for you
 That's a pact made by two brothers a relationship that grew.

Erasers

Erasers are the nicest things of that there is no doubt
 We write wrong words a few quick swipes and big mistakes fade out
 And you will find erasers of a very different kind
 Extremely helpful if you will try to bear these facts in mind
 When you bump someone in a crowd and almost knock her down
 A soft I'm sorry may bring smiles and rub out that old frown
 Apologies, invariably obligate mistakes
 And three small words I love you can erase the worst heartaches

Before It Is Too late

If you have a tender message or a loving word to say
 Do not wait till you forget it but whisper it today
 The tender word unspoken, the letter never sent
 The long forgotten messages, the wealth of love unspent
 For these hearts are breaking for these some loved ones wait
 So show them that you care for them before it is too late

I Surrender

Oh Lord, guide me, protect me, help me
 Teach me the ways of your righteousness
 Show me the glory of your lovingness
 I know I stumbled and fell along the way
 I take a look back to my past
 When I know I'm not supposed to
 And that's where I need you the most
 To help me, to guide me, to show me the way
 Teach me how to look forward,
 And leave the past behind...
 Because I know you have
 I lift up my hands to you
 With my eyes closed
 And open arms
 And I pray to you
 And I ask you
 To guide me, teach me
 To show me what your love is,
 "I surrender."
 To only you, my Lord, my God, my Savior
 Oh Lord, teach me, show me
 And guide me for the rest of my days
 I know what life has to offer
 But I'm struggling to find my way...

 There have been many roads
 I have came across
 And many battles I have fought
 But the battles are only getting tougher
 I need you to show me
 And put me on the right path in life
 I know the roads ahead
 Of me are only going to get tougher...
 So I put my faith in your hands
 "I Surrender."
 My mind, my heart and my soul...

In order to 'surrender' one must humble himself to the maximum. And for some, especially the ones that act as though they're the hardest people ever to walk the earth, surrendering or even humbling one self can be a monumental task. Who wants to admit they're weak? Well, this next writer isn't weak at all, yet he writes about surrendering his will over to his higher power. For him, humbling himself is an act of courage and spiritual strength. For others, sometimes it's just a cop out to not deal with their current situations. However, we hope that if he continues on his spiritual journey, he'll have more "Beautiful Days," down the road. He's writing from Kern Valley State Prison in Delano, CA.

Beautiful Days

Oh what days we shared,
 The nights we had,
 Holding each other so close
 For comfort...

There's days we cried,
 And days we laughed
 Oh what beautiful days
 they were...

some days were rough
 some days were calm
 Oh what beautiful days
 We shared...

Those days we had, just sitting
 In silence,
 Those days we talked,
 Were beautiful days
 Yes they were...

But the days we missed,
 Were the days I spent
 Behind these prison
 Walls...

Our day is near, I just
 Can't wait,
 To spend the rest of
 My days,
 By your side...

Can I Feel?

Can I feel said he
 I'll squeal said she
 Just once said he
 Is it fun said she
 Can I touch said he
 How much said she
 A lot said he
 Why not said she
 Let's go said he
 Not too far said she
 Can I stay said he
 This way said she
 If you kiss said she
 Can I move said he
 Is it love said she
 Yes it is said he
 But your killing said she
 Tip top said he
 Don't stop said she
 Oh said he
 Go slow said she
 Now said he
 Ow said she
 It's time to sleep

SALADIN MINOR II.

Writing from Provo, Utah, we give you a poet who knows a lot about the relationship between man and woman. "Can I Feel?" is a poem about the dialogue between man and woman when sex is involved. And after reading what he wrote, we can tell he's experienced this kind of thing before. He then closes with a very short poem called, "Love's Criteria," where he lays down the rules of love. Interesting read...

Love's Criteria

Love can be lost
 Love can be found
 But not picked off the ground
 You may pick and choose
 The ones that stay
 But not the ones you lose

*Love can be found
 But not picked off the ground*

Clean And Sober

Today I am clean and sober with many trails in my way
withholding not my future
not knowing what lies ahead

Today I am clean and sober
With all the struggles, frustration and snares all along
my way that I need to endure

Today I am clean and sober
with sorrow at my side for all those who still are in
bondage crying to be free.

Today I am clean and sober
resting in my Lord.
That's it is not a dream but a reality that He alone
is carrying me and you.

Today I am clean and sober
thankfully, that I've finally surrendered
for today and all the tomorrows
that I need to share with everyone so they can be
blessed
to be clean and sober, the Lord wants you to.

We want to welcome this next first time writer to our precious pages. He is a skilled writer and poet who writes us from DVI (Deuel Vocational Institution) in Tracy, Ca. He's really into religion and God so many of you who believe will find his poems refreshing. He also writes about life and what it means for him to stay away from drugs. A great first time writer and we're sure he'll send us more once he sees this published.



Near By

it's cloudy outside as doom it's so near by,
for the lost are scattered all over the world
but if they would only be still and hear the cries of our
lord
the light would shine through like a twinkle in the sky
near by, god has so much in store for us,
if his people would only yield to his call,
for he is coming for his bride who will be waiting
in the still of the night
be patient and learn the things of him
for that day is very near when the trumpets shall sound
as our savior arrives

Snail Of Walls.

i hope i'm not in bondage
of these snails of walls and how can i get out
well i'll tell you again how can i be set free
through these snails of walls,
he is the real thing trust him and love him
with all your heart
because he awaits for you to come to him
with open arms
to guide your path with peace love and understanding
to rightness and kindness,
he desires you to sing, clap, stomp and shout
he, kings of kings
lord of lords
he can set you free within these snails of walls,
and if god is for you who can be against you
within these snails of walls
no matter how much someone tries to put you down
jesus will always be with you in these snails of walls,
so i leave you with one thing, read your bible,
god is your only hope within these snails of walls,
god bless you all

Mothers Unconditional Love

a mother and grandmothers love,
where does it all begin, with joy and happiness,
when her eyes finally meet the child,
god has placed in her arms,
to protect and nourish it's way in life,
watching as her child grows,
the gentle smile on a face
a gesture of love instead of a word
or when a wound is found she hurries to comfort and aid
the pain away
reassuring it's ok
teaching the simple things
to walk and talk
or eat by yourself,
learning to say "please," "thank you," and "excuse me"
or even "can i go"
with lots of love and kisses
for a job well done,
as the years pass by another child sparkles
with her unconditional love,
all the other children gather
to praise and admire the little one that has come
working together to build the family
that came from afar
never did she imagine it would someday be a star
of reality and joy,
as the years have gone by we all gone our separate ways
only to find that we need to go back and embrace our
mothers' unconditional love,
so proud of a mother or grandma
or even a great grandmother
as she sits back and sees her task of life has been
fulfilled
as she eases into her eternal life
waiting our day at those pearly gates
when reunited with our mothers love
that has directed us to
mothers unconditional love

Dead Man's Curve

You thought you'd get away
 But no your time you will pay
 Ripping and running the streets
 Little did you know death was on the creep
 You come into my curve fast
 And as you accelerate
 I'm plotting a life to take
 Maybe I'll take your friend, or even you
 It doesn't made matter, I have a job to do
 I don't get paid by salary, or by the hour
 Every soul I take it brings much power
 Death on this curve takes place everywhere
 Taking many souls without a care
 So next time your hot-rodding
 Showing off to your friends
 Remember it could be the end
 Dead man's curve many lives I have taken
 Do you really want your mom to see your brains as
 bacon
 I'm not here to shock or scare you
 I'm an angel, I came to prepare you
 I don't care what color you are, one thing is for sure
 I leave a permanent scar
 So don't drive fast, don't be a fool
 You only have one life to lose

This next first time writer was inspired by Rhonda Jones and Clarence Reese to send us his creations and we're grateful that they inspired him because he's a magnificent poet. Here's a little history on him, "I have been writing poetry for sixteen years. I am also a published poet. My work has appeared in these literary journals, The Society of American Poets and Struggle." Basically, he's been writing poetry longer than some of us have been living, so let's give him an attentive ear and hear words sent to us from Selma, Alabama. Keep writing us please we really enjoy what you have to say...



For The Love Of Money

My name is Money, I'm your master, and solution to
 your debts
 I have brought smiles to many faces
 I'm paper thin, and money crisp green
 People love and cherish me in most cases
 So call me cash or loot or whatever you will
 Because you see in my name
 Much blood has been spilled
 Some people forever seek me throughout their life span
 Even engaging in illegal activity
 To obtain my one hundred piece "Benjamin"
 I'm a master to many
 And they have become my slaves
 They obey me for greed sake
 Some have even taken early graves
 In blue and white collar America
 I'm known as currency, and in the ghettos bread
 Even the filthy rich still seek me
 For whom I have over fed
 Many mighty men like kings, and presidents
 Have put others at death's risk for my sake
 I paid them off handsomely for their efforts
 For on my bills you will find their face
 Honorable men like preachers, deacons
 And judges are no exception to my rules
 I'm crafty, and dangerously treacherous
 Turning wise men into fools
 Most put me in bank accounts
 Some even bury me underneath the ground
 To make sure I'm secure
 You can't even trust yourself around me
 I'm like a magnet to your hand
 With a powerful lure
 I'm promised riches forever
 But don't become greedy and clumsy
 For it will be a shame for you do die
 For the love of money.

Faces Of Death

Loyal wise but poor men
 Who envision massive chaos here on earth
 Nightmares of once deceased humans
 Returned here to eat us
 Some rest for many centuries
 Others only for a short while
 But the same remains a
 Decomposing body bring a foul odor
 Plus the cologne worn by morticians
 At the funeral home
 Imagine the fragrance and the scent of death mixed
 The scent is unbearable
 Surprisingly many never notice, they just
 Carry on with the ceremony
 Individual sorrow, anxiety of being lonely
 Strong spiritual energy surround me
 Supernatural heat even felt in a closed casket
 Warmth of their presence was short lived
 Cold drafts sets in enough to kill as the world rotates
 Ultimately advancing to dust
 Unearthly voices speak to my soul they serve as a guide
 Somewhat of a preliminary role
 That foresaw the destination of men souls
 Very accurate in unspoken detail
 Decapitation lives taken in the mist of sleepy
 The most hideous face you have ever seen
 So don't trust in worldly riches or material wealth
 As they won't serve any purpose
 When you encounter faces of death

Think

Could it be that the golden leaves of life
 Shines the light of reincarnation
 On a nation of modern technology
 Hypocrisy floating in the sky
 A everlasting dying novelty
 Like the dialogue between you, and God
 The day the nail his hands I sobbed
 Bullets that resemble blood ricochet my brain
 Something like being shell shocked, but with ten times
 the pain
 Death he visits many annually
 Some die yet so young, because life's crazy.

Heavenly Graffiti

Gigantic conversations pervade the twilight intensely
 Perceptions of the unknown visit me
 Three nomads with a contrary conclusion
 Revealing a blazing apparition, that en-light the
 vagabonds with a simple solution
 Evolution is evident in their time of desperation
 Speaking positive quotations expands their deliberation
 Now knowledge comes as a mist in the wind
 To whomever will receive it, unless they stop breathing
 Being optimistic comes as a conflict of interest
 It brings forth metaphors, and chronic sagas to
 illustrate how serious
 Broad inscriptions preoccupy the sky graciously
 Having a high authenticity, and flawless accuracy
 behold, heavenly graffiti

To Change

First and foremost allow me to extend my salutations to all! I would like to elaborate on why it is of importance and a must to change.

I myself have lost 10 years behind these walls, doing it to the best of my ability without losing hope for change. Remember, you can't change the world but you can change what you do in it. As like how your former course of conduct can become anew. For we were not created to do time, but to become somebody in life, we all have talents. Whether it be big or small, never limit your mind, body, or soul.

I see so much talent in The Beat, it inspires me to continue forward in shedding some of my talent. For we learn from one another, yes it is how we use what we learn and never judge a book by its cover.

Explore with a strong and positive attitude in all areas and on all levels. With this said, stay strong with your head up and smile. We all have a true purpose and a true meaning in life.

Sincerely.

The Facts

The Beat Within, allow me the moment to extend all you young and old men and women the honor of my salutations.

I find myself in Administration Segregation. Yes, to the best of my ability not blaming no one or nothing for my own actions of instinct. The system is against all whom choose to break the law, a fact. Yes, it is corrupt within itself. It is at this moment we must realize within yourselves.

Can we win if we choose to do our thuggish thing? A fact, for only so long. It is why we must learn as likewise myself to construct a positive point and set forth goals to accomplish whether it be small or big.

Remind yourselves-never give up. Never limit yourself. Reminder-united we stand, divided we fall.

With this said, I humbly excuse myself.

Man's Faith

Abstract describes my mind state
 A abundance of problems, but I keep the faith
 Raunchy peers, and tears keep me on bending knees
 I pray to God to make the devil flee
 Desolate thoughts lead my mind in a land far away
 Strangers in this place, that Jesus brought me out one
 day
 For my faith is overwhelming, made of godly particle
 pieces
 An unsolved mystery do unto my friend Mr. Telekinesis
 For my faith in God absorbs any thought of fear
 Of an unspoken revelation of Jesus tears
 For midnight proceeds at a awesome pace
 Reminiscing on time past as if we were face to face
 My mind levitates on spiritual wings it seems
 Hovering over my tribulations by any means
 Consolidating my thoughts to set my mind free
 Telling the evil one to get thou behind me
 Chemically my dormitory is enriched with many stories
 A vision of prophecy of the ones who lived before me
 Anguish and blood follow the footprints in the sand
 A bizarre blizzard that no human can withstand
 For my tolerance is high with long suffering
 Never frigid, but warm there will be no divorcing
 Yes the one I serve is invincible, and incredible
 Able to do any, and everything, and in some eyes very
 mystical
 So let your hearts be real, and deeds be true
 For you can't fool God, for these words are said with
 truth

LEON

This is Leon writing to us from Solano State Prison. In the following pieces he shares plenty of advice and wisdom with all of us. He'll fit right in the scheme of things as he has compassion for the younger generation. Hopefully we can get him to write again soon because the young people really need to hear this.

To The Youth

This piece goes out to the youth of today in and out of the system. As you all know, mistakes are bound to happen due to the fact, we are not perfect, nor are we unstoppable.

I once thought I was unstoppable and never paid no mind to the words of wisdom my folks were trying to establish in my mind at a young age. Now at the age of 28 years old and still doing time. From the Hall, to the county and now the big house, CDC. I wish I would have paid some mind, it would have saved me a lot of heartache and sorrow and most of all tears to those whom really love me.

I cannot focus on my past nor can I change it, but what I can do is learn off my wrongs and prepare for a better tomorrow. I don't blame no one, based on I've made my own choices in life. But one thing I can change now is my next choice. Apply your time wisely, whether you be on the outs or in the system learning whether it be small or big, it is essential in life. Never limit yourselves, explore all new horizons and enjoy your youth. It's so valuable. With this said I humbly exit and enter with all due respects.

*Ok, Beat = I got it!
So now, I'm gonna say it!
Don't spell check it, or punctuate it!
Even, outdated — I'd still meditate it!*

*'Cause, the words; mostly come from the heart!
That's! The Beat Within: how's this, for a start?
So, let me tell you how I miss you:
"Never mind the mail, officer — did I get another issue?"*

read the rest of Terry Lytle's BWO piece on page 51

